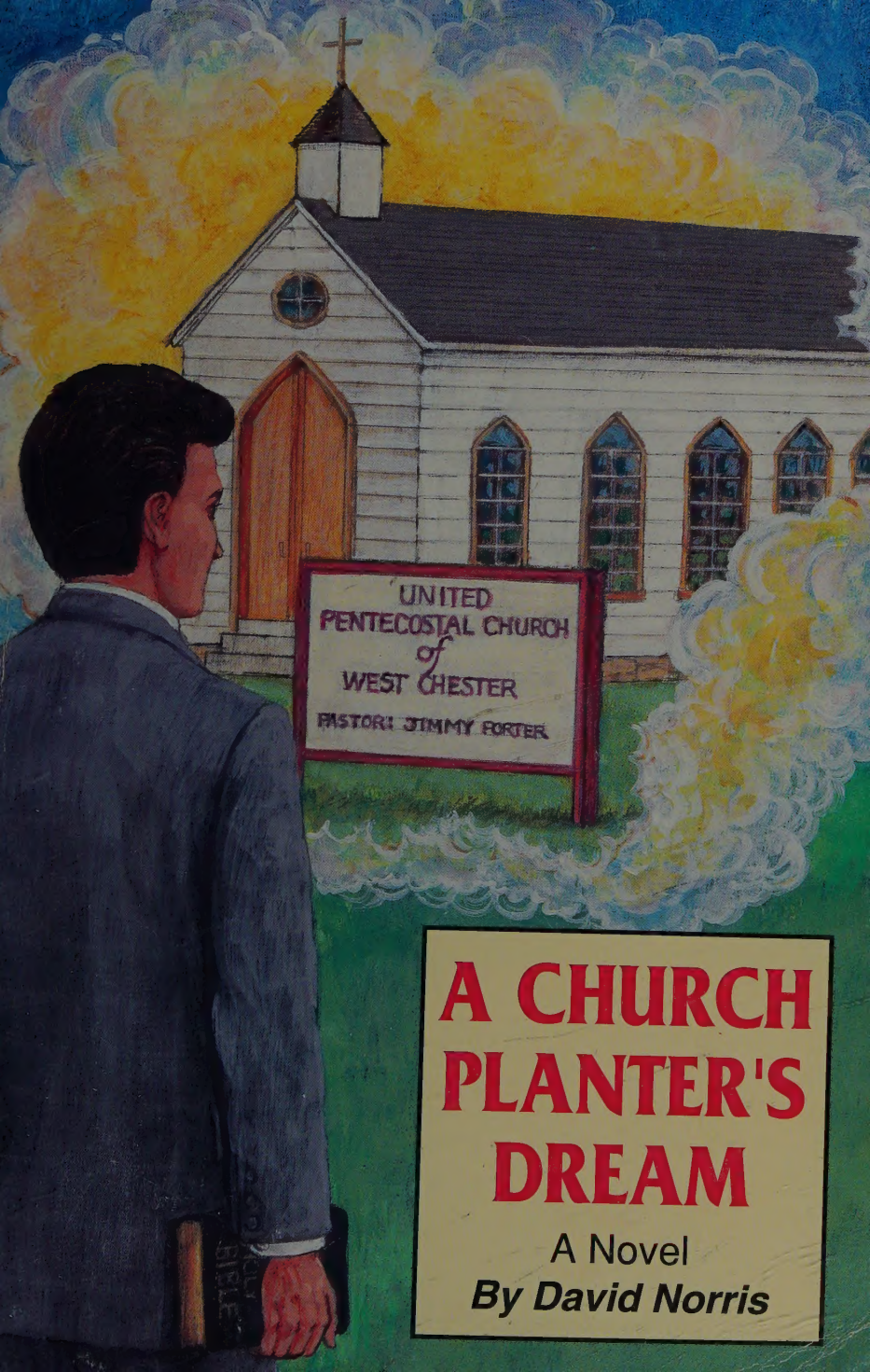

A CHURCH PLANTER'S DREAM

A Novel

By David Norris

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INFORMATION:
When using this book as a TEXTBOOK

At the conclusion of each chapter you will find up to three points that can be helpful to you as a teacher. They are:

1) Discussion
2) To The Teacher
3) Assignment

Foreword

The following pages unfold the drama of a 20th Century missionary. While it is written in the form of a novel, the scenes are very realistic. Each chapter articulately describes the many stages of the missionary from burden to fulfillment.

Author David Norris has the heart of a missionary. He and his wife successfully planted a thriving United Pentecostal Church in West Bend, Wisconsin before launching into the field of Christian education.

As you walk through these pages you will feel the heartbeat of desire. First a still small voice, then vocal expressions between husband and wife, resulting in consultation with the pastor. Finally a decision: God really does want us to start a church.

The distant city presents a cultural shock. The economic situation is overwhelming, but brave, undaunted soldiers of the cross move into the battlefield.

There is the first contact and the first person born of the water and Spirit, successes and failures, defeats and joys, watching a church come to birth.

You will not want to put the book down until it is finished.

J. E. Yonts

Introduction

The following narrative tells the story of how a vision becomes reality in the birth of a church. In an effort to put "flesh and blood" on home missions policies and procedures, this story combines incidents in the lives of several home missionaries into one narrative. In the story, Pastor Johnson, Jimmy, and Jeannie are composite characters. All other people in the narrative represent those who are either currently serving or have served in the capacities indicated. And while names of certain characters have been changed, cities, districts, and district policies are intended to accurately reflect the current policies at the time this book was written. To receive more information about specific home mission policies in a particular district, it is best to contact the district home missions director.

In one sense, the story of how a church was started in West Chester is true—for it tells the story of courageous young people who have poured themselves out in service to the Lord. Certainly this story embodies the kind of sacrifice given by scores of home missionaries who have left the security of their family and friends to start a work for the Lord. In another sense, though, this story is still waiting to happen. There is no United Pentecostal Church in West Chester, Pennsylvania. West Chester, and hundreds of cities like it, still waits for someone to answer the call—someone who has a vision of the waiting harvest field.

Chapter 1

Pioneer Home Missions

"I'll meet with you every week"

The knock on the door was insistent. "Come in," called the pastor, and quickly a young man burst into the office bubbling with enthusiasm.

"Great sermon tonight, Pastor Johnson," he said sincerely to the man who sat behind the desk. "Have you got a minute to talk?"

"Sure, Jimmy," said the pastor cheerfully. He quickly attempted to straighten the desk that was still littered with miscellaneous study materials he had used in preparation of the evening sermon. "Have a seat," he said as he piled several books on top of each other.

Jimmy Porter plopped comfortably into the chair across from the pastor's desk. Tonight he had no time for casual talk. He had something important on his mind. Not that he always had important questions. If the truth were known, sometimes he made up questions just because he enjoyed being around the pastor. There was just

something special about coming into Pastor Johnson's office. Jimmy fairly memorized its contents, from the missions plaque that hung on the wall between the bookshelves to the stuffed piranha that made itself at home on the big desk. The pastor always seemed to have time to answer his questions—well, most of the time anyway. If he didn't have time, Jimmy was quick to find out. Their relationship was open enough that Pastor Johnson was free to tell him if he was intruding.

But tonight Jimmy was more intense than usual. He said in a business-like tone, "I sure appreciate your time."

The pastor recognized from Jimmy's countenance that he had something serious to say. "What can I do for you?" asked the pastor without any further delay.

"Well, Pastor, I'm having a real struggle with some major things in my life right now."

Pastor Johnson leaned forward on his desk, propping himself into a listening position. "Jeannie is okay, isn't she? I didn't see her in church tonight."

"No, she's fine, Pastor Johnson. Ashley was a little sick today and Jeannie stayed home with her. It might be that Ashley has the flu, or maybe she's just cutting her two-year-old molars. I'm not sure. No, everything's okay at home." Jimmy had hoped that the pastor wouldn't notice that his wife missed church tonight. She never missed and hated to be gone, but he had convinced her to stay home by suggesting, "Jeannie, Pastor Johnson has so many new people in church to take care of, he won't even know you're missing."

Jimmy Porter's face reddened just a little, but he continued. "No, what I came to talk to you about was something personal that I'm going through."

"Yes . . . ?"

"Well, lately I've been real dissatisfied, and I don't know what to do."

He paused, so the pastor asked gently, "Is the youth group going okay?"

"Yes, sir, it's not that."

"How is your home Bible study going with Joe?"

"Joe is fine. He wants to be baptized."

Pastor Johnson's expression never changed. He had a knack for keeping his expression so you hardly ever knew what he was thinking down deep. Jimmy thought of this while several nervous seconds ticked by. The long pause was broken by the pastor.

"Well, if it's not a problem at home, and everything is going well in the church, then . . ."

Jimmy Porter wasn't sure if this was the right time. He couldn't seem to find the right words, and he wasn't sure how he should even approach the pastor; but he took a deep breath and then blurted out suddenly, "Pastor Johnson, I think God is calling me to start a church." That was all he said, but he felt better immediately. He had said it—the thing that had been gnawing at him, stealing his sleep, and making his life discontented. He blurted out his very heart and soul to his pastor. If the pastor wanted to tell him he was wrong or explain that he wasn't able or worthy of pursuing this, then okay, but at least he had gotten it off his chest, and that in itself was a big accomplishment.

Pastor Johnson leaned back in his chair and looked at Jimmy Porter thoughtfully. Jimmy Porter had seen that look before. He knew that his pastor gave advice very carefully and wasn't quick to tell people what to do. After

a lengthy pause he spoke. "Jimmy, you've been in the church for eight years now, and you've proven yourself faithful, so I don't disregard what you're saying to me at all. But let's talk about what's happening to you right now. Tell me how you're feeling."

The "feeling" question. Pastor Johnson always seemed to ask that one. Jimmy had been with him on several occasions when he was counseling others. "How do you feel about what happened to you?" "What do you feel about what they said about you?" "What do you feel that God would have you to do?" And now he was the one who had to answer. It was tough to be on this side of the desk. How could he tell his pastor exactly how he felt about starting a church—that it was absolutely right, and that if anyone did or said anything to stop that then they would be wrong? But of course he couldn't say that, for in the end he knew that whatever his pastor advised would be the course that he would take. So he started slowly, tentatively. "Pastor Johnson, I know that I've been feeling restless and frustrated even though things have been going well for me. Every time I pray I just can't get it out of my head that God wants me to start a church. I almost feel like I'm going to die if I can't!"

"Well, Jimmy, please don't die," said the pastor with a twinkle in his eye. "I'm not sure Jeannie would appreciate that very much at all." But then he was more serious. "God may indeed be speaking to you, calling you to start a church. But, on the other hand, maybe He is just giving you a greater burden to pray for home missionaries."

"But, Pastor, I don't think I could get this miserable just over a burden to pray more. I think this is something a lot deeper than that."

Pastor Johnson leaned back in his chair as if he were meditating and then finally he offered, "Jimmy, there is a young man from the church who came to see me about a year ago. He said that he had a burden for home missions work. I was happy for his desire, but I didn't want him to make a mistake. Together we worked out a plan for him to explore God's will in his life. I suggested to him that he take his time—he needed to gather the facts, explore what doors were open to him, and then prayerfully consider his options. Above all, I asked him to consider what it would cost him and his family. Well, after about a month or so he decided that maybe he wasn't actually called to start a church but that God was just giving him a burden to pray for home missionaries. He's still in the church here today."

"Oh," said Jimmy, a little deflated. The pastor smiled and waited for Jimmy to speak again. Jimmy sighed and said, "So the man didn't have a call after all?"

"It's hard to say. Maybe in the future God will use him for home missions work, but he decided that he is not ready just now; and frankly, I would have to agree with him."

"Why is it so hard to find the will of God?"

"That's a tough one, Jimmy. It's not as if God is trying to hide His will from us. It just takes time for Him to reveal it to us. The Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, but the light from that lamp shines out only a little further than the next steps that you walk."

"Pastor Johnson, do you believe it is not God's will for me to start a church? Because if you don't think it's right, I'll just forget the whole thing right now. Or try to, at least."

"Now I didn't say that either, Jimmy. There is something you should know about the will of God. It is such a personal thing that it would be a very rare thing for me to absolutely know God's will for you. I'm not sure how I feel about it yet. I think I'll have to know more in order to evaluate the situation. Jimmy, what do you know about starting a church?"

"Not very much, I guess."

"Well, what would you think about studying the subject? I could meet with you personally and go over the steps necessary to start a church. I'm not sure how many weeks we would do it—I guess it would depend on your interest and my schedule. But at least that way you see what it would take to start a church, and then you could make a more educated decision as to what God is directing you to do. If God opens the doors for you to go into home missions work, then you'll be more prepared; and if not, the experience will still be good for you.

"Jimmy, twenty-six years ago, Sister Johnson and I wrestled over the very decision that you're grappling with. But when we came to this city, we felt certain that God had called us to start a church here. I believe that if it is God's will for you to start a church, then you can have that assurance and feel that you are in God's plan, and I'd like to help you work through that."

"Great! How would we start?"

"First, a homework assignment." Pastor Johnson reached back on his bookshelf and pulled out several books. He handed them to Jimmy and said, "Read these books and tell me what you think of them."

"What are they?"

"Books about how Pentecostal pioneers started

churches. This one is *Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers, Volume I,* and this is *Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers, Volume II.* They tell about different men who started churches all over the country."

"Like you, Pastor Johnson?"

The older man laughed. "No, I'm a Johnny-come-lately to starting churches. The real pioneers lived a generation or two before I ever thought about starting a church."

"Really?"

"Like Homer White, whom a crowd picked up and tried to kill; or C. P. Kilgore, who went from town to town and left revivals wherever he went; or G. T. Haywood, who held meetings in the Midwest and North and whose legacy still stands as a pioneer and a songwriter."

"I don't know anything about those men. You and Sister Johnson are the only pioneers I've ever known."

"Hmm. I see I've been a little remiss in sharing our heritage." He reached back for several more books. "Here. Take these books as well."

Pastor Johnson picked out *Spenser Leslie Wise, He Stands Tall,* and *Before I Sleep.*

"And you want all these read by next week?"

"Well, you can get started anyway. Now this is a good one," said the pastor thumbing through *He Stands Tall.* He temporarily forgot the young man sitting across from him as his mind began reliving the pages of the book. Pastor Johnson seemed to have a passion for reading and was particularly fond of history. Finally after a half a minute had elapsed, Pastor Johnson looked up and seemed to be surprised to see Jimmy sitting across from him. "Oh yes, you'll like these. Get started in them. We'll meet a

week from Tuesday and talk again. Seven o'clock?"

"Seven o'clock it is. Thanks, Pastor Johnson—you're the greatest."

By the time Jimmy went out to his car, there were only a couple of cars left in the parking lot. His late-model car shone in the light of the spotlight that illuminated the parking lot. He slid easily into the seat and piled the books on the seat next to him. He breathed in the smell of his new car and looked into the mirror at the man behind the wheel before he suddenly decided that he didn't look like a home missions pastor. But then, what did a home missions pastor look like anyway?

He hurried home, anxious to tell Jeannie about their meeting. It was funny. A year ago he was the happiest young man in the church. He thought he had the best church and best pastor in the world. But now he felt a stirring that made everything around him seem so mundane. He talked to Jeannie about it on several occasions, and although she was empathetic, she didn't have any answers. "Jimmy, I don't know. You'll just have to talk to the pastor. I'm not sure if it could be God's will or not."

And so he did. It took him several weeks to work up his courage, but tonight he had finally brought it up. Pastor Johnson's response was better than he had ever anticipated. Jeannie was afraid that the pastor might think that he was too immature, but Pastor Johnson never said one word about that.

Jimmy slammed on the brakes, grabbed the books, and almost ran to the front door of their little house. Their home was hardly bigger than a shoebox. They were only renting, but they had a big yard for Ashley to play in. Someday they planned to buy their own home. Real estate

was fairly cheap in this little Kansas town, and Jeannie's parents said they would help them get started, but now all of that seemed a thing of the past.

Jimmy wondered if he would ever be able to afford a house where he wanted to move. Real estate was sure to be expensive in a big city. "Oh well," he said aloud as he fumbled for his keys to his front door, "with God, all things are possible. If He wants me to have a home some day, He'll provide."

Before he could insert the key into the door, it swung open, and Jeannie stood there in her long green robe, with Ashley sleeping on her shoulder. "Well, how did it go?" she asked with excitement in her voice.

"Well, it went—" he said with enthusiasm, but before he could get any further, Jeannie put her finger to her lips and Jimmy could see that Ashley was sleeping in Jeannie's arms.

"She just fell asleep," whispered Jeannie. "She's been crying all night."

"Oh, I'm sorry," whispered Jimmy, and he went over to inspect his sleeping little girl. He stroked Ashley's golden curls and then said sympathetically, "You must have had a long night."

"It was okay," said Jeannie patiently.

"Did you know I love that little girl's mother?" he said affectionately as he kissed Jeannie gently on the cheek.

"So how did it go?"

"I'll tell you all about it. But first, let's get Ashley tucked into her crib."

Jimmy and Jeannie talked for almost an hour, but still, Jimmy couldn't get to sleep that night for thinking about

his meeting, so he pulled open the book *He Stands Tall,* a book about R. G. Cook, and began to read.*

At first it took him awhile to bridge the historical gap. He knew nothing about poverty or the hard times that were described. Jimmy read for about half an hour before the book started to become real to him. It seemed that R. G. Cook endured more than a lifetime of hardships. He had a lonely childhood, and after he came into the church his first wife died in childbirth. Now it became interesting, for it seemed that this preacher was about to court a young lady preacher named Nellie Reppond. R. G. Cook traveled some distance to see her where she was conducting evangelistic services.

From the time he first saw her, his thoughts had been on marriage. When his chance came to tell Nellie that he wanted to marry her, Ralph tried to appear nonchalant, but he was nervous from his feet to his head. He pretended to be reading his newspaper as if it were not unrehearsed and unplanned. Her response was not as favorable as he desired, but it wasn't a refusal either.

"Well, I think we ought to wait," Nellie responded. "I haven't much money, and you haven't either. I think that you ought to go and hold a few meetings and get a little better fixed. I will do the same." The young French girl from down on the plantation in Louisiana was practical as well as pretty.

It was after Nellie's somewhat negative response that Ralph noticed his paper was upside down! He quickly but quietly turned the paper around, and he also turned around Nellie's desire to wait.

The next day a friend went with Ralph to get the marriage license.

"Your full name, please?" asked the clerk at the court house.

"Ralph Gleason Cook," was the firm response.

"Your bride's full name?" was the next question.

"Nellie . . . Nellie . . . Oh, I have forgotten! What is Nellie's last name?" the nervous bridegroom stuttered to his friend.

Finally all the legal work was accomplished and tiny pretty Nellie Jane Reppond, the fiery girl evangelist from Louisiana, was married to Ralph Cook, the young preacher from the East, on July 3, 1920, in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Brother Cook's dear friend, Brother L. R. Ooton, performed the ceremony.

"When are you going to get married, Brother Ooton?" Brother Cook teased his friend. Often the ladies flocked to hear Brother Ooton, who was sometimes called "the sweet singer." His good looks, personality, and talents made him a favorite among the young ladies.

"Oh Brother Cook, I am in love," was Brother Ooton's response. Then he would add, "I am in love with Jesus."

Brother Ooton delayed his marriage, but Ralph and Nellie were in love with Jesus as well as each other. Together they made a great evangelistic team. Ralph and Nellie took turns preaching. She would preach one night, and he would preach the next. The tiny 103-pound lady had a powerful voice for preaching, and she could also lead the singing of the grand hymns that L. R. Ooton and G. T. Haywood wrote. Ralph was not only a great preacher, but he also had a marvelous voice for solo singing. Together this young couple preached all through southern Illinois. They both felt that they were in God's will, and they enjoyed His blessings upon their ministry.

Jimmy read on. He was inspired by several miracles that took place. Although many of the names in the book were foreign to him, he enjoyed the drama of these early days.

Brother Albert S. Davis, a dynamic evangelist, held revivals in several small towns in Illinois.

He had an unusually good revival in Benton, Illinois, a town of gamblers and miners. Quite rough people! It was whispered around town that when men gambled, they placed a loaded revolver in the middle of the table. Anyone who cheated was shot by the first man who could get the gun.

Although it was a rough, tough town, Brother Davis was able to stir the people, and there was a move of God and many of the people turned to God. But as was his practice, Brother Davis moved to another town, leaving the converts without a pastor. Consequently, when Brother and Sister Ralph Cook arrived in Benton several months later, almost all of the converts had backslidden or moved away. There were hardly enough people still living for God in Benton to hold a meeting.

Benton was not the only town where a revival under Brother Davis would result in many converts, but left without a pastor, these converts would soon lose out with God. Royalton, Illinois, was another town with a similar experience. There were only a few saints left when Brother and Sister Cook preached a revival in this town in the latter part of 1920. The first-hand experience of seeing so many converts from the great revivals conducted by Brother Davis go back into sin made Brother Cook aware of the importance of establishing churches with pastors.

The converts needed to be taught the Word of God if they were to stand against Satan and sin.

When the Cooks were to preach a meeting in Benton, they carried all their worldly goods in a couple of suitcases on the train. As they got off at the depot, several small children began to laugh and giggle. Some pointed to the Cooks.

"Look, he's so t-a-a-ll and she's so short! Are they with a circus?"

"Humph!" muttered Ralph, who was quite annoyed by the outrageous be havior of the children. "These children here in Benton have had no upbringing!" he gruffly added.

"Ah, they are just teasing, Ralph," laughed Nellie, who thought it was all a big joke.

Ralph, who did not want to leave a bad impression on his new bride, tried to get rid of the children, but they continued to follow the couple down the street. "They must think that we are in a show," [he said] as they made their way to the place where they would be staying.

In spite of Ralph's irritation over the greetings at the depot, the meetings were blessed of God, and the few saints still living for God thoroughly enjoyed hearing more about the great truth of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the oneness of God, and water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. They had no proper church building in Benton, so they had to resort to cottage prayer meetings.

Jimmy read the next page, which revealed that the Cooks went to a revival in Carolton where there too they were invited to pastor a group of people.

About the middle of the first week of revival services,

Brother Lewis came to visit Brother Cook.

"Young man," he said, "I don't know whether you know it or not, but you're sitting in a field of clover. I'm retired, and I am worth thirty thousand dollars. My brother-in-law is worth over a hundred thousand dollars. Miss Mary Brown, the schoolteacher here in our group, is worth about a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, and she also owns a large farm. If you will just quit being so dogmatic about this message and ease up and get people saved and then teach them later, you would really do good here."

"Brother Lewis," Ralph Cook replied, "I am not for sale. You and your money perish together."

Jimmy read on. Brother Cook was to preach the last service of the revival. . . .

Ralph rose to his feet and stepped out in the opening under the trees in the grove. The sun was shining down among the trees and almost into his eyes. Suddenly he felt the sweet, anointing presence of the Lord warming him just as real as the warmth from the sunshine. He turned to the Book of Daniel and started to preach. The anointing become so heavy that he was almost in a trance—he hardly realized what he was preaching. As he preached, he closed his eyes, partly because of the sun and partly because of the anointing of the Spirit. Soon he realized that he was singing:

I am the Good Shepherd;
I am seeking my wandering sheep.
Who will help me to find them

And with vigilance keep?
I know they are hungry . . .

When Ralph Cook opened his eyes, he saw that some of the saints had fallen back in their chairs. Others were lying on the ground. Apparently God had knocked them down. After a long prayer session, several of the saints went to the back of the barn and voted Ralph in as their pastor.

Brother Cook decided to stay, even though this well-to-do group had been previously been feeding him little more than potato soup. He did stay for three or four months "before the keen spirit of conviction began to wear off and critics began to carp, criticize, and complain." Ultimately he was asked to leave because of the straightforward way in which he presented the truth. Although one of those who had opposed him offered her home for him to stay, that was the only hint of kindness extended upon their being asked to leave. Cook declined the invitation.

"Let's go Nellie! We need to leave this place. We've got our little Ford. Let's drive down to Louisiana. I want to meet your folks." So the couple set out for Louisiana. As they left, Ralph turned to Nellie in an effort to cheer her. "Let's keep praying, Nellie. We're in the will of God."

Jimmy paged through several other books before he finally went to bed. The next night Jimmy read in the biography of G. T. Haywood, *Before I Sleep.** It seemed that Haywood built a thriving church in Indianapolis, but

while he was doing that over the course of a number of years, he traveled extensively, sometimes staying at a particular location for weeks during a time of revival and establishing of a church. One of Jimmy's favorite parts of the book was a first-hand account that Haywood recorded of his travels.

An Experience of a Loyal Son of God
by Elder G. T. Haywood

And you shall reap what you sow.

It was in December 1911 that I was invited to come to Winnipeg, Canada, for a ten-day meeting. My fare to the western Canadian metropolis had been sent to me several days previous. I was greatly enthused over the thought of being able to go out of the United States for once in my lifetime, and hastily made arrangements with my little assembly for the coveted trip into Canada.

Leaving home ordinarily clad, I reached St. Paul early the next morning over the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, but as my route into Canada was over the Sea Line, I was obliged to remain in the Twin Cities until about five o'clock that evening.

While waiting for the evening train I boarded the streetcar and started for Minneapolis to try to locate some acquaintances that I had made by correspondence. After wandering about for some time, I finally found one with whom I spent most of the day. The time we spent with them was very pleasant.

As time drew near for my train to depart for Winnipeg, I bade them farewell, and again took the car for St. Paul. As the car passed "midway" the conductor came

through the car collecting the scenic fares required of all through passengers. Sitting near me was a man who did not have the extra fare and as a result quite an argument followed between him and the conductor. As he was about to be ejected from the car he turned suddenly to me and said, "Pard, will you let me have a nickel? I'll give it back to you at the end of the line." "Yes," I replied, and preceded to reach in my pocket for the desired amount. As I gave it to him many eyes were upon us. What they thought of me getting it back, I don't know.

At the station, I boarded the train for Winnepeg. Above my fare I had several dollars. I was well fixed. That night as I sat asleep a strange vision passed before me. I dreamed that a cloud had gotten between me and Winnipeg, and instead of reaching my destination, I found myself back in Indianapolis, but unable to give any explanation for my failure to get there. When I awoke I found that the train was still en route for the Canadian border, and I concluded that it was only a dream after all and that I would be soon crossing the line into Canada. As I looked out of the window the ground was everywhere covered with snow. It was about five o'clock in the morning when we halted at Emerson, Manitoba, for customs inspection. Everybody opened up their baggage and of course I did also, feeling confident that everything was all right. When my turn came, several questions were asked, which I thought were answered satisfactorily, but to my surprise, the officer said, "You will have to get off here and be examined." As I arose to get off, thinking it would take but a few moments, he said, "Bring all your baggage." He led me, with two or three others, into a little dingy kerosene-lighted room where a man was seated at a high desk over some yellow sheets of tissue paper.

As I looked out the window, I saw my train pulling away from the station. "Won't I get away on this train?" I asked. "No," he replied, "you won't get out of here until about five o'clock this evening." Shortly after this we were led away into town, wading through the snow about one foot deep. Here we were landed in a "hotel" that was more like a barroom, where men were loitering and smoking the greater part of the day. About noon, we were taken to the doctor for medical examination. After several tests, the doctor said, "You are all right, you may go."

I returned to the hotel and found out that the train that went into Winnipeg that evening departed from another station on the other side of town. Thinking that everything was satisfactory, I lugged my baggage through the snow to the other station and began my patient waiting for the arrival of my train. About three o'clock in the afternoon the officer who escorted me to the hotel that morning, suddenly appeared at this station. As he saw me he said, "Where is your release?" "Release? There was none given me", I replied, "but the doctor said I was all right and could go." "Yes, but he should have given you a certificate. Wait here till I come back," he said and departed apparently in haste.

It was about twenty minutes until train time when he returned and said, "You cannot go into Canada, because you did not pass the medical examination, and you have not got enough money on you. You should have at least fifty dollars, so you'll have to go back." "Do you give me my fare back to Indianapolis?" I asked. "No, we only give you free passage back as far as Thief River Falls." "How much is the fare, then, from there to Minneapolis?" I inquired. "You will have to get that from the conductor when you

get on the train," he replied.

When I boarded the train the conductor informed me that the fare from Thief River Falls to Minneapolis was just twenty-five cents more than I had. I searched every pocket available for that extra twenty-five cents, but found nothing. The coach was filled with passengers, among many of whom were foreigners. At Thief River Falls, the train stopped. Here they put off two or three foreigners who also were not permitted to enter Canada. Not having enough money to return to their starting point, they were detrained here, baggage and all tumbling into the snow at about ten o'clock at night. Being unable to find the needed extra fare, I reached forward and touched a young man who occupied the seat in from of me and said, "Pard, will you loan me a quarter? I lack that much of getting to Minneapolis." Without questioning me, he steadily replied, "Yes sir," and reached into his pocket and gave me the needed amount, saying, "Do you need anymore?" "No," I replied, thanking him for his kindness at the same time.

When the conductor came around to collect the fares, I found that he had raised the fares ten cents more. I told him that I did not have it. So he passed me by. This left me but one cent in my pocket. While searching my pockets I found five cents worth of postage stamps. These I offered for sale to a man who said he was a Canadian, but he would take them from me. This made me have six cents when I landed in Minneapolis that early winter morning, six hundred miles from home, and without having tasted food for two days.

Upon entering the station I immediately went into the men's room to wash up, and as I did so I said, "Lord I am here. What do you want with me?" After washing I

was led to go out and hunt for the mission that I had heard of before in that city. It was very cold, and the sidewalks were very slippery. I did not have enough money to send either telegram or special delivery. That precious little six cents was indeed valuable to me, and I held fast to it.

When I arrived at the mission and asked for the pastor, I was given a cold reception by a young man who seemed offended because of my early intrusion on his peaceful rest. "He is not here," he said and closed the door, through which he had peeped at me with one eye.

Leaving there, I began to retrace my steps toward the center of town, but this time I walked down the railroad. Here I found several section hands who directed me to the pastor of a Methodist church. I found him in his study. After [I related] my experience he told me he had a preacher engaged for a special meeting, but he gave me a card of introduction to one of his deacons who operated a lunch-room, where I could obtain a meal.

Leaving my suitcase with the minister, I went out in search of the restaurant. The proprietor was a rotund, jolly sort of fellow, and soon I won a place in his heart. He not only gave me a meal, but gave me an invitation to come and eat there as long as I was in the city, free gratis.

My next move was to get somewhere to preach. I was directed to a Baptist preacher, later in the evening, who also informed me that he had no openings as he had an evangelist engaged. His wife invited me to remain for supper, but they could not keep me for the night. They thought, probably, I could obtain a room of lodging at the Volunteers of America, but I told her that God did not tell me to go there, but into "whatever city I entered, inquire who is worthy and go there to abide." "The test is on someone

in this city," I replied further, "but it is not on me."

At this remark she said, "I have a brother here who is an undertaker, and perhaps he will let you stay in the rear of his establishment tonight." Here she immediately took up the phone and called him. He told her to send me around there and he would provide for me. I did not care about sleeping with the dead, but I went to see him. He was very friendly, but only a sinner. He was very kind and thoughtful. Instead of placing me in his place of business, he rented me a room with a family nearby and paid three nights' lodging in advance.

I thanked him very kindly and went to get my baggage from the Methodist minister, who, when he found out that I was provided, asked me to come and preach for him the following Sunday morning. I accepted the invitation. After putting my baggage in my room I went out in search of a Scandinavian mission on Minnehaha Street and preached there that night. They gave me a liberal offering and invited me back Sunday afternoon. That Friday night's meeting was a great blessing to them. After a good night's rest I awoke the next morning praising God as usual. The day was spent visiting about the city.

Sunday morning, I went to fill my appointment at the Methodist church. There were about sixty people present. Several preachers were in the pulpit. After the usual program, the Decalogue and so forth, one of the ministers was asked to read the opening Scripture lesson.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed out of the hand of the enemy." He read and closed up the book and sat down. This was the very same Scripture given me four days before as I

sat at the Canadian line waiting to be deported. By this I gathered that God wanted me to relate my experience. I did so, after which I preached everything that God gave me about Holiness, baptism of the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues, divine healing and the coming of the Lord. I knew I had only one chance there and made well of the opportunity. The "amens" were few and far between. At the close an offering was taken for the church first, and then one for the "visiting brother." My offering was sixty cents. After service a number of people shook hands with me and commented upon the sermon.

That afternoon and night I preached again at the Scandinavian mission. God's blessings were upon the meeting. Two more liberal offerings were given me and I soon had enough money to return home. In the meantime the pastor at Winnipeg being informed of my deportation, wired me sixty dollars with which to return to Canada, but I was led to return the money to him and postpone the adventure until some other time.

On Monday evening I boarded the train for home and upon my arrival found all anxiously waiting for my return. About two years later a minister from Minneapolis came to our annual convention, who said to me, "Elder Haywood, you may not know me, but I know you. Do you remember the time that you preached in the Methodist church in Minneapolis on a Sunday morning?" "Yes," I replied, "I remember it well, as well as if it had been but a few weeks ago." "Well, I was there in the pulpit with you," he said, "as a visitor from the Baptist church. Your message on holiness convicted me and I started out from that time to preach holiness. A few months later another minister came and led me into the baptism of the Holy

Ghost, and now I have a Pentecostal mission in that city."

About ten years later, I visited Minneapolis and was surprised to find that the undertaker had been saved and called to the ministry, while the woman whose room he rented for me was introduced to me in Columbus, Ohio, in 1928, just seventeen years later filled with the Holy Ghost, praising and blessing God. Through these precious souls many have been born into the kingdom of God, and all because I was stranded for five days in the metropolis of the Middle West.

"Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Jimmy couldn't quite fathom the world in which Brother G. T. Haywood lived, but he enjoyed the unique personality of Haywood and the absolute trust in God that he exhibited.

Suggested Bibliography of Early Pentecostal Pioneers

Dugas, Paul D., compiler. *The Life and Writings of Elder G. T. Haywood,* Stockton, CA: Apostolic Press, 1968.

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Goss, Ethel E. *The Winds of God.* Rev. ed. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1977.

Loudermilk, Mary. *Just One More Place.* Hazelwood, MO: Home Missions Division, UPCI, 1984.

Tyson, James L. *Before I Sleep: A Narrative* and *Photographic Biography of Bishop Garfield Thomas Haywood.* Indianapolis: Pentecostal Publications, 1976.

Available from Christ Temple Bookstore, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Wallace, Mary, compiler. *Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers, Volumes I and II*. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1983, 1984.

Assignment

Explore your spiritual roots. Select either your own personal history in the church (if your family has been in the church for several generations) or preferably the history of your local church. Who was the founding pastor and under what circumstances did it get started? Do you know where the founding pastor was saved? How far back can an individual's spiritual roots be traced?

Alternate Assignment

Make an oral report on a Pentecostal pioneer and his or her method of church planting. (To give an accurate reflection of early Pentecostal pioneers, it is desirable for some students to select men and some to select women.) Note how the starting of churches varied, not only according to the time, but according to the place as well.

Their Story: 20th Century Pentecostals by Fred Foster can be helpful for the early outpouring of the Holy Ghost and how people came to be Pentecostal and Oneness. Chapters 3-11, pages 41-117, are perhaps the most helpful in this work in giving a sense of origins. While the chapters do not deal with starting churches per se, they do give a sense of how the understanding of the Apostolic message came at the turn of the century.

Several volumes provide a written synopsis of early ministers and their wives. *Profiles of Pentecostal*

Preachers, Volumes I and II include some important biographies. The books can be helpful in tracing one's heritage, as they are replete with names of early pioneers. A student can select a biography of someone in the same region or of someone that catches his or her interest. In Volume II, three of the first four biographies are representative of the early evangelist—home missions pastor: Mark Baughman, Donald Berry, and Benjamin Blunt. Winfred Black is an example of a second-generation home missionary. He stayed for a length of time in one place. David Gray's history largely follows this later pattern and is an excellent inspirational story as well.

Check the Pentecostal Publishing House catalog for other biographies available from Word Aflame Press or the General Home Missions Division.

*Used by permission of Word Aflame Press.

*Excerpt from *Before I Sleep* used by permission of Pentecostal Publications.

Chapter 2

Organized Effort

"I have a friend"

It was 6:59 p.m. Jimmy walked into Pastor Johnson's office, one minute early for his scheduled appointment. He set several books down on the pastor's desk and plopped comfortably into the chair across from him.

The pastor smiled. "Are you finished with all those books already?"

"I've read two of them. And I've started a couple more as well."

"Well, what do you think of them?"

"I learned a lot. I hope I don't have to take some sort of test on the books though, because there were so many names and dates that I don't think that I could remember it all."

Pastor Johnson laughed. "No test tonight, Jimmy, but that's not a bad idea. So what did you like about the books?"

"Well, I was really impressed with all the miracles

that happened in the early days of Pentecost. It seemed like there was always something unique happening. I don't know, maybe it was because they had so much faith. God seemed so real to them."

"That's true!"

"But in some ways I had a hard time relating to back then. They were so poor, and they had a lot of problems I don't have."

"Who was your favorite pioneer?"

"It was funny. I'm not acquainted with any of these men, and after awhile I got mixed up as to who I was reading about. But the way the books were written, it seemed like I was supposed to know them. It was strange. I almost felt like I was looking at someone else's photo album. Since I've only been in the church a few years, I kind of feel like an outsider."

"I know how you feel, Jimmy. I'm the first one from my family to come into the church, and I kind of feel like an outsider, too. I actually think my wife got a lot more out of these books than I did. Her family has been in the church for several generations, and she certainly knows a lot more about the people in the books than I do."

"I really liked reading about R. G. Cook. There weren't so many names in that one, and I liked him because he was so honest. And I also liked G. T. Haywood. Say, didn't anybody go by their first name in those days?"

Pastor Johnson laughed. "So tell me, how did they start churches in the early days of this century?"

"All different ways, I guess. What was amazing to me was that usually they didn't stay with a church for very long. And if they did, they were off preaching someplace else while they were there. Didn't anybody ever

stay home and pastor?"

Pastor Johnson roared in unrestrained laughter. "Well, Jimmy, things were different then. They needed churches all over the place; and if people hadn't gone all over the place preaching, we wouldn't have all the churches that we have today."

"But it seems like they didn't really take care of the churches that they started."

"There is something else you should understand. Because the Lord was pouring out the Holy Ghost and restoring truth, the early pioneers had a sense that Jesus would be coming any second. My wife heard R. G. Cook speak one time. He said that he hurried up and got married to his wife, Nellie, because he knew the Lord was coming and he wanted to marry her before the Lord came. At the time he was telling about it, they had already been married for over fifty years."

Jimmy chuckled and then asked, "But why did they leave churches without a proper system set up to keep them going?"

"Sometimes they did set up a system. Some of the pioneers were very successful at this. But since most of these men and women were rejected by organized churches, they were afraid that too much organization would kill the Spirit. So, between their suspicions of organized efforts and their urgency to preach the Word, they often left a group without a pastor so they could move on and tell someone else."

"What a waste of effort!"

"It's important not to be too critical of the past. They endured sacrifices that I never had to endure. They acted upon the knowledge they had with zeal and integrity that

is hard to fault. I sometimes desire their newness and willing obedience to the voice to the Lord."

"All right, then. What is the right way to do it today?"

"I was hoping that you'd ask," said the pastor with a twinkle in his eye. "The right way to do it today is by listening to what God wants you to do. We have more resources available to us than they did back then, but it is still just as important to be obedient to the Lord today as it was back then.

"It is possible to start a church by getting in your car and praying for God to lead you someplace. Then when you find a town you could always preach on the street corner if nothing turned up—but there is probably a better way. More often than not, a home missionary gets direction and help from his home church, the district, the General Home Missions Division, or all three. Jimmy, do you remember the Christmas for Christ offering?"

"Is that the one where you show the filmstrip?"

"Yes, that's it. That offering goes to fund people who start churches. It doesn't support them entirely, but it sure can be a tremendous help for those who are just starting out. Home missionaries still have to live by faith, and some of their stories could easily compare with those early Pentecostal pioneers, but for the most part, it is a lot easier nowadays."

"When did it change? When did home missionaries start getting help?"

"I suppose it was a gradual thing. But I think the real big organizational changes happened in the 1960s. It was then that the funding began, and there was a real emphasis on revival."

"Did you get Christmas for Christ help?"

"No, but I have a friend who was one of the first recipients of the Christmas for Christ funding. His name is Royce Elms. Sometime ago he wrote down some interesting experiences he had as a home missionary. Here, why don't you read what he has written?"

Jimmy read:

The freeway trailer court church. *When we arrived in Los Angeles, California, we were towing a twenty-eight-foot trailer. Our first priority was to find a place to park it, and in Los Angeles that was a major problem. We were very grateful when we finally located a trailer park with one space available. We decided to start the new church in the living room of our trailer on Sunday morning.*

We knew we were in a predominately Spanish-speaking area, but we didn't realize just how predominantly! My wife, Annette, wanting to help get our nonexistent congregation started, went out to visit the trailers around us. It seemed that the mantle of Sister Vesta Mangun was about to fall on her! But her confidence and faith began to wilt when at each trailer door she was met with the wave of a brown hand and the mumbled words, "Me speaka no Ingelish"!

After about five minutes she arrived back at our small trailer where I was studying for a volatile message that would hopefully ignite our new church. I could tell Annette was downcast and discouraged. She stepped up into the trailer doorway and just looked at me for a long exasperated moment. I said, "How did it go, Sister Vesta?"

I really didn't mean to be sarcastic; I was actually attempting to find some humor in a discouraging situa-

tion! My wife pointed at me, shook her finger in my face, and said, "The whole problem is they 'speaka no Ingelish' and I 'speaka no Panish!' Why, Sister Vesta herself couldn't win anybody to God in this place if she couldn't speak Spanish!"

Well, we did start our new church that Sunday morning with three in attendance: my wife, my daughter, Deborah, and myself. In the tiny living room of our trailer I called the service to order with great zeal and fervor. My wife played the accordion for song service, which I led with such gusto the whole trailer rocked on its jacks!

Thousands of vehicles were passing right by our trailer, because Interstate 10 was just a chain-link fence and a few feet away. Cars, trucks, buses, and motorcycles combined to make a constant roar of sounds. But we had church in spite of them! I preached, my wife shouted, and my two-year-old daughter plugged her ears with her fingers! A new church had been born in the City of Angels on the last Sunday of March in 1967!

First annual business meeting. *The church was one year old, and it was time to set the church in order with a business meeting. The meeting started smoothly. We were downstairs in a fellowship hall at the Women's Club. I was carefully reading the church bylaws we were adopting. About twenty to twenty-five members were present.*

Suddenly, the side door was flung open, and into the sober meeting came a very intoxicated man! In a slurred but powerful bass voice, the man screamed to his wife, "Viola . . . I'm gonna whip you! Viola . . . where are you? . . . Viola? I'm gonna whip you!"

Paul lurched around the little group, looking for his wife. When he finally spotted her on the back row he lunged

toward her. She jumped to her feet and backed away from him. I quickly dropped my sheets of paper and ran to her rescue! I had dealt with Paul before and I felt that the Lord would help me calm him down.

So there I was between Paul and Viola, and we were backing away from him slowly. Behind Viola was my wife, and behind her were all of the soon-to-be members of the brand-new home missions church! Paul lurched forward, and the rest of the group stumbled backwards in a long line.

Some people began to laugh at the hilarious scene, but Paul didn't think it was funny at all. He just kept trying to get past me to Viola, yelling threats all the while.

I began to realize that our first annual business meeting was over, if I didn't find a solution to this crazy situation. So I asked a brand-new convert named Ray to help me. Ray was a special trophy. I had walked up a long driveway week after week to teach him a home Bible study. I had prayed many hours and fasted numerous times for his salvation. During each Bible study, while I taught the lesson, Ray had drunk from a large bottle of wine.

Often his questions at the end of the lesson were slurred and incoherent. Many times I left his house wondering if he understood anything I was teaching. Finally, after months of teaching, one night Ray did not have a bottle of wine! Soon Ray was asking how and when he could receive the Holy Ghost. One glorious night we took him and his wife Audrey to the upper room of the Woman's Club, and both were filled with the Holy Ghost! We were so excited we couldn't sleep all night long. Our first couple had been marvelously delivered and filled with the Holy Ghost!

Now it had been months since Ray had drunk any

alcohol. I asked him to take Paul outside and try to settle him down so we could finish our business meeting. Ray said, "Don't you worry about him anymore. I'II take care of him, Pastor." So Ray persuaded Paul to go outside, and I persuaded the people to listen to the reading of the bylaws.

I called for a vote on accepting the bylaws, and the vote was unanimous. About an hour after the incident, the side door swung open again, and in came two intoxicated men, singing, "He's a jolly good fellow; he's a jolly good fellow"! Yes, Ray had taken Paul to the corner bar and joined him on his drinking binge.

We were devastated! We couldn't believe our eyes and ears. Months of sweat, blood, and tears had seemingly gone down the drain. Such is the fate of a home missionary pastor when the work is young and immature. But this incident is funny to us now, because we would rather laugh than cry.

Ray tried to get himself together several times, but he was never able to shake the bottle again. He was one of the greatest disappointment of our church-planting effort in Los Angeles, but we will always remember the backwards merry go-round at our first annual business meeting!

Old Mother Hubbard's home missions cupboard. *Times were getting tough. After twelve months our Christmas for Christ monthly check stopped coming in the mail, but we were determined to trust God to supply our needs. I knew the cupboard and icebox were getting bare, but I didn't know just how bare. We got up one morning and my wife informed me we had one egg, a few ounces of hamburger, and two slices of bread.*

She wanted to know how I wanted it fixed. I said, "Let's pray Jesus down and let Him multiply it!" Well,

we had lived on the ragged edge of starvation for weeks and we could handle it. We had learned the code of every home missionary: "When you don't know what else to do, PRAY!"

The three of us sat down at our bountiful meal and held hands. I prayed, "God, we are just trying to do your will and do our best to start a church here. But you see how Old Mother Hubbard's cupboards don't have anything on ours. Please, Lord, hear our prayer and send us some grocery money in the mail TODAY. We claim it and count it as done, in Jesus' name." Then we ate one of the best meals of our lifetime. It is amazing how good a little bit can taste when you are hungry!

After the meal we began to figure out when the mail arrived at the three possible places we could receive a letter. The first possibility was the post office box we used for the church. We jumped in the car and drove to the post office. My wife and daughter waited in the car while I hurried in to check our box. We were disappointed when there was nothing in the box but junk mail.

It was nearly time for the mail to arrive at our rented house, so we headed back home and waited until the postman came. With great anticipation of answered prayer we opened each letter "in Jesus' name," but there was no money in any form. Our faith was really being tested! The last possibility was twenty miles out on the freeway at the trailer court where we had lived the month before.

We didn't know if we had enough gas to get there and back, however. The car was on empty. I felt that we could make it out there, but I was sure we would never make it back. Annette said, "Let's go for it! I just feel faith that

God will not fail us! He promised that we wouldn't see the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging for bread!"

So we started out for San Gabriel on an empty tank of gas and a heart full of faith. When we arrived at the cluster of mailboxes twenty-five minutes later, I began to shout the victory! I could see a letter through the plexiglass! Annette grabbed me and said, "Get it out! Let's see what the Lord has done!"

My fingers trembled as I worked with the little combination lock. Finally, the door opened and I pulled out the letter. Annette looked at the return address and moaned with a spasm of bonafide doubt. The letter was from a destitute lady who lived in Indianapolis on a meager income. There was no way this precious lady could have sent us more than a word of encouragement. We had treasured her prayers for us but had never received any money from her, nor did we expect any.

I quickly opened the envelope and there was a letter of encouragement and . . . and . . . AND a check for fifty dollars! Never in our lives before or since have we appreciated a gift of money as we appreciated it that day! We cashed it at the nearest bank branch, bought some gas, and headed horn-honking happy to the grocery store! We praised the Lord and sang, "I've never seen the righteous forsaken or His seed begging for bread"!

The billy club incident. *We were really excited about a new family who began to attend our church. One new family to a home missionary is like a hundred-soul revival to a larger church. The father of the family worked two jobs so he was not able to come to church very often.*

His good wife and precious daughters were a great blessing to our little congregation. Many times the father

would drop them off at church on Sunday night and go on to work. We were happy to drive them to where the father was working when he was unable to pick them up after church.

The father, whom we will call John, worked as a security guard for the largest McDonalds drive-in in the world at that time, located in south Los Angeles. Sometimes there were hundreds of teenagers and college students on the premises at one time. There had been numerous riots, gang fights, stabbings, shootings, and other violent incidents. So McDonalds hired security guards to keep the peace on the premises.

Sometimes when fights broke out the security guard could not handle the numbers, and the manager would call the police. The police would usually scramble to the sight in force in a matter of five minutes, make some arrests, and calm things down for a while. On a bad night the police would have to be called the second time.

One Sunday night we drove this family down to McDonalds to wait for John to get off work. While we were sitting in the car I noticed that John was having problems with two guys. I got out of the car to observe, and the argument became more heated. John ordered the two guys back to their car out in the parking lot.

I followed afar off and observed the guys get in the car. It seemed that everything was going to be all right until the driver started spewing out a stream of filthy language. John said, "You're under arrest! Stay right where you are. The police will be here in a minute." He quickly signaled the manager to call the police, which he did.

The incident would not have escalated except that the police were in the middle of a shift change and they took

at least fifteen minutes to respond instead of five. The six guys in the car got angrier by the minute. After about ten minutes, with no police on the scene, they made their move.

The driver started the car and put it in reverse. John ran around behind the car with his billy club and demanded, "Stay right where you are! Don't you move this car. You are all under arrest! The police will be here any second!"

But the driver floor-boarded the accelerator. John slammed the trunk lid with his billy club while jumping back and to the side! He smashed the left rear tail light out as he leaped out of the way of the accelerating car. During the thirty seconds these things were happening, a car full of teenaged girls had pulled in to the parking lane behind them.

The tremendously accelerating carload of guys slammed into the carload of girls! The collision sounded like a bomb going off. The rending of metal and the shattering of glass filled the air. The girls screamed like all of them had been severely injured. Out of the wreckage came the six wild-eyed, yelling guys, attacking John like a pack of wolves!

John began to spin around like a top, swinging his billy club like a helicopter blade. One of the guys tried to reach in and hit him. John broke his arm with a single powerful blow of the billy club! Another guy tried to penetrate John's defense, and John dropped him to the ground with a blow to the head. All of this happened in a matter of seconds. During this ordeal on the parking lot, another crisis was taking place in our car. The good wife and three daughters of the embattled security guard were screaming out in fear to my wife, "They're going to kill him! If that mob gets a hold of him, they will kill him! Oh, why don't the police come?"

They were no doubt right. A mob spirit was sweeping over the parking lot. People had poured out of their cars and surged toward John. The four guys left were trying to help the two guys lying on the pavement, but the mob was sensing the kill and kept moving in on John. They were screaming, "Get him back! Let's get him back for hitting our friends!"

John was smart enough to back up to the huge golden arch so no one could attack him from behind. The mob quickly surged around him, taunting and pressing in on him. Suddenly, a guy leaped out of the crowd from John's left and smashed him on the nose and cheek with some kind of brass knuckles! His nose was broken and pushed to the side of his face. Blood gushed down over his chin and onto his uniform.

He was stunned semiconscious by the blow and slumped down on the ground in front of the arch. The mob, seeing the now helpless security guard, moved in for the kill. There was no doubt in my mind that they were going to beat him to death! I finally got my shoes unglued from the sidewalk and started toward him to do whatever I had to do to try to save him.

Then it happened! My wife, Annette, flashed by me and leaped through the crowd to John's side. She reached down, pulled his billy club out of his hand, and started swinging it wildly in the faces of the mob! John looked up in a dazed, semiconscious stupor, and blubbered through bloody lips, "Sister Elms, you better put that down; you might get hurt."

She waved her billy club at the mob and said, "Don't you worry about me, you better worry about them!" Then she screamed to the mob, "Now you listen to me, everyone

of you that want to hurt this man. You are a ROTTEN BUNCH OF HUMANITY! This man is just trying to do his job. He's just trying to keep the peace around here. Now what are you doing? ACTING LIKE A BUNCH OF ANIMALS, THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE DOING!"

Someone moved in the seemly petrified mob and she screamed out, "Don't you DARE MOVE, OR I'II KNOCK YOU TO KINGDOM COME!" They didn't move again for a long moment. Then a policeman slipped to my wife's side and softly spoke, "Ma'am, you better let me have that billy club. You just might hurt somebody real bad!"

Annette took one long look at the uniformed officer and said, "It's about time you got here, Officer, I don't think I could have held off this BUNCH OF ROTTEN HUMANITY much longer!" Then she turned to me saying, "Royce, what have I done?" and fainted dead into my arms! Finally, I discovered why I was there that unbelievable night, and I carried her to the car so she could lie down to recover her strength.

The mob was now moving toward their cars in response to police commands. The parking lot was bathed in red by the flashing lights of several police cars. I could hear the voice of one of the guys drifting over above the hum of the dispersing mob. "Man!" he called out to someone with awe in his voice. "Have you ever seen anything like that? That lady was more powerful than the whole L.A. police department!"

None of the girls in the smashed car were seriously injured. The six guys had disappeared from the scene, but they were later arrested when they went to a hospital for treatment. An ambulance picked up John, and we followed it to the hospital. He would be operated on several times

to repair the damage done to his nose and face.

Every time we visited John in the hospital he would greet us by shaking his head and saying, "I still can't believe you stole my billy club and held off that mob singlehandedly. Woman, you could have been killed! But I do want to thank you for coming to my rescue and possibly saving my life." Annette, always responded, "There is no way I could have done that without the power of God giving me courage and strength. To God be the glory!"

The night of the coming of the Lord. *There was a young couple we were able to win to the Lord through home Bible study whom we shall call the Goodsons. The Goodsons had been deep into drugs for a number of years. They had been pushers as well as addicts, but God delivered them from their expensive, life-destroying habits for a span of several months.*

God's deliverance can only last as long as people want that deliverance, however. When the Goodsons became discouraged they foolishly returned to their escape through drugs. They would return to the church periodically and attempt to live for God anew. We would counsel them and pray with them during these occasions, trying to help them back to God.

One night we arrived at church to find Bill Goodson was waiting on the porch. He was high on a mixture of drugs. I took him downstairs and tried to reason with him, explaining that he was in no condition to attend the service. He would disrupt the service for the rest of the congregation, so I asked him please to go home. He asked if he could sit on the back porch by the platform and listen through the wall. I told him he could as long as he didn't

disturb the service. He said he would sit on the back porch and be quiet.

Service was already started by that time, and I went in and joined in the worship. I actually forgot Bill was outside when the Lord began to move in a special way during the service. When it came time for the preaching of the Word, I was excited about the message the Lord had given to me.

I announced my subject as "The Coming of the Lord." I began to preach about the signs of the end time. Then I preached about how the Lord was going to descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of an archangel. I really got excited while preaching that Jesus could descend from heaven . . . ANY MINUTE!

In the middle of my excited discourse, my wife began making odd gestures to my assistant on the platform. She seemed to be wanting him to check on something. I really didn't catch on to what she was upset about. Then, as I was describing the coming of the Lord out of the heavens, she abruptly got up out of her front-row seat and walked hurriedly to the back of the auditorium. Right at that moment it all happened.

I said, "Jesus could be coming down out of heaven RIGHT NOW!" At that precise second the ceiling of the auditorium gave way, and a foot and leg came through. Insulation poured down on the chair where my wife had been sitting just seconds before. The whole congregation was open mouthed and spellbound! They thought it was the Lord until it dawned on them that the leg was encased in blue jeans!

I was so dumbfounded, I could not speak for a moment. When I finally got my voice back, I urged the congrega-

tion to go downstairs to finish the service. The old insulation was floating in the air and starting to cause people to sneeze and cough. But the people sat like zombies. They didn't move for a couple of minutes. Then one by one they got up and went downstairs.

After arranging for a prayer meeting in the basement I went back up to survey the damage. I looked up into the hole and there was the face of Bill Goodson broken up in drug-crazed laughter! I shook my head and asked him how he could do such a terrible thing. He said, "I just wanted to act out your message so the people will never forget it!"

He had climbed up an old, rickety ladder and crawled into the ceiling over the front-row area to hear the preaching better. My wife had heard his movements up above and tried to get my assistant to go check on the noises. She was glad he had not gone, because if she had not left her seat, she would have been buried under the insulation!

***The day before Christmas.** On this special morning we awakened with great excitement. After struggling for months with problem after problem, disaster upon disaster, and losing more people than we imagined possible, we were going to go home. Home was San Diego, where I was raised and my Mom and Dad lived. We often arrived very discouraged with the progress of our home missions church and left encouraged by the faith and confidence my folks had in us and our God.*

We loaded the car with everything we would need except Christmas presents. Our income was so small that we were barely surviving. We had no money for Christmas presents for ourselves or anyone else. We only had enough gas to drive to San Diego, but the folks would help us get back.

We were enjoying this little morsel of happiness and anticipation when tragedy struck! My wife suddenly suffered a miscarriage! The stress of raising up a new church had taken its toll on her body. Someone has to experience church planting to understand the unique pressures and problems involved. She had taken too many incidents too personally, and her body could not handle the pressure.

Now I drove as fast as I could to the hospital instead of to San Diego. All the way to the hospital, we were crying and praying for the strength necessary to survive this latest disaster. We tried not to ask why, but we did not know how we would pay for the doctor and hospital. We were grateful that the hospital admitted Annette, even though we had no insurance.

We were told that my wife would not be released until we had paid a certain amount of money. I waited until the doctor had taken care of my wife and she was resting quietly. Then I slipped out to my little car and turned it toward our little church on the side of a hill. I could hardly see to drive because I was weeping so profusely.

All the way to the church a flood tide of agony, disappointment, and discouragement was building up. How were we going to survive this impossible situation? I felt like the disciples: Doesn't the Lord care if we perish? There seemed to be no way out of this darkness. I desperately needed to get my wife out of the hospital the next day, Christmas, but we didn't have any money and didn't want to borrow some we couldn't pay back.

I don't remember opening the front door of the church, but I do remember running down to the altar! I dove into the altar like a swimmer off a diving board. I was a desperate man. I wanted to live to help my wife, but I

wanted to die to be out of my misery. I cried out to the Lord, and He heard me! I poured out my heart and soul, emptying out every heartache and pain.

As I lay in the floor, a soothing breeze from heaven began to flow over my broken and battered spirit. God literally pumped me full of strength and hope. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Teach me, Lord, teach me, Lord, to wait!"

I drove back to the hospital refreshed and encouraged in the Lord. I told my wife that somehow God would make a way. The next morning we miraculously received the money necessary via Western Union. God had moved on a totally unexpected source to wire us two hundred dollars! Like a bolt of lightning out of a cloudless sky, God had supplied our desperate, emergency need!

God is truly the home missionary's "present help in the time of trouble!" We made the trip to San Diego rejoicing in the God of our salvation. We were refreshed and encouraged to be faithful to our calling while enjoying Christmas with my mom and dad. We returned to Los Angeles with a fresh vision the next weekend, knowing that God would see us through to victory!

Discussion

1. The definition of a home missions church is a church that is less than three years old. Is this a good definition? Why or why not?

2. If it were your responsibility to decide how money should be spent, and it was your job to invest five thousand dollars in a home missions work that was ready to

begin in a city, how could you best invest the funds? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of the following suggestions.

a. Put a down payment on property.

b. Bring in the best speaker for an evangelistic crusade in a local hotel or school and invite neighboring churches to participate.

c. Purchase resources for advertisement such as newspaper, radio spots, or a weekly radio program if it were available, etc.

d. Pay money directly to the family who is beginning the church so that they can spend more time in ministry.

e. Purchase chairs, song books, tracts, and a sign to put in front of their house and keep the rest of the money in the bank for emergencies.

Assignment

Contact either the home missions director in the district or the Home Missions Division at headquarters and inquire as to what is generally offered to every home missionary.

Chapter 3

Methods of Church Planting

"Twelve ways to start"

"How can you be certain of the will of God?" Jimmy asked.

"Well, tell me what you're feeling," replied Pastor Johnson.

"That's hard to put in words. I feel restless, but I know that that's not always a sign of the will of God. I feel a burden for the lost, and I feel an urgency to do something about it, particularly in the way of starting a church."

"Jimmy, I believe that God can enable anyone, but I'm more and more of the opinion that it's important to know if God has given you gifts that are compatible with this kind of ministry."

"Okay," said Jimmy, "I'm game."

"Let me ask you some questions that I've used as a survey before," said Pastor Johnson.

"Shoot."

"Are you a leader; that is, do people respect what you say and follow your advice?"

"Well, I lead the youth group and the teen Sunday school class. I wish I could say they always follow my advice."

"Is your family in order?" asked Pastor Johnson.

"Well, I try for it to be. I don't have very many family devotions, but Jeannie and I both have personal devotions, and either Jeannie or I pray with Ashley before she goes to bed. We have a few arguments once in a while. Would that disqualify us?"

Pastor Johnson smiled. "Wait until I'm done, Jimmy."

"But really, we get along fine," said Jimmy.

"Do you handle money all right?" asked Pastor Johnson.

"Yeah," said Jimmy, "right out of my hand to pay the bills."

"Do you have overdue bills?" asked the pastor.

"No, sir," answered Jimmy. "At least not that I can think of."

"That's good. Are you a mature Christian?"

"I'm not sure what you mean," replied Jimmy. "I got saved my first year of college, and that was about eight years ago. I guess that's not very long, is it?"

Pastor Johnson didn't respond. "Do you enjoy people, talking and working with them?"

"Oh, yes, I do," said Jimmy. "I like that! Finally, I scored well on one."

"Do you win souls?" asked the pastor.

"I've had Bible studies and several people came in the church, but one backslid. And I'm having another study right now."

Pastor Johnson smiled. "Are you willing to sacrifice money to start a church?"

"Yes," said Jimmy.

"Is your family willing to sacrifice to enter this ministry?"

"Yes. I mean, well, I guess that question is really for Jeannie to answer. We've talked about it."

Pastor Johnson asked, "Do you submit to those over you in authority, and do you cooperate with your peers?"

"I try. I can get along with almost anyone."

"Okay, that's it, Jimmy," said the pastor.

"Well, did I pass or fail?" asked Jimmy.

The pastor replied, "It's not the kind of test that you pass or fail. These are all areas of maturity in our lives. Certainly you have leadership qualities, and I would say as your pastor that in many ways you have maturity above your years. Still, we need to go slowly. Before we go too much further, I think we need to talk to Jeannie, too. Can she come next Tuesday?"

"Yeah, sure, no problem," said Jimmy.

"Jimmy, did I ever talk to you about the mother-daughter church concept?"

"No."

"Well, it's where one church starts another church, often in a community near to it. A home missionary generally works out of the mother church until he gets a group large enough to become independent. It's a concept that's proven quite effective."

"Are you saying that you might want me to start a church out of this church, that this would be the mother church?"

"Well, that is certainly a strong option that could be explored."

Jimmy sort of looked down. "Oh, I see."

"Do you have a problem with that?"

"Actually, Pastor Johnson, God's been dealing with me about a particular area. It's over a thousand miles from here."

"Where's that, Jimmy?" asked the pastor with a concerned crease across his forehead.

"The Philadelphia area," replied Jimmy.

"Hmmm," said Pastor Johnson flatly. "I see."

Jimmy could read neither approval or disapproval in the "I see." He longed to know more about what the pastor was thinking. Jimmy offered, "Since they presented the need at the last general conference, I just can't get it out of my mind. In our movement at least, Philadelphia is probably the most unchurched area in the North American continent. I just can't get away from the inner feeling that this is where God wants me to go and start a church."

"Well, that's been six months now," said Pastor Johnson, "It certainly is more than just the emotional appeal of the presentation that is causing your burden."

"Are you saying I'm just responding to an emotional appeal?" asked Jimmy, disappointed.

"No, quite the contrary," said Pastor Johnson. "I'm saying that you've retained that interest and concern now for six months. That's generally a good indicator. Almost anyone can sense the need when an emotional appeal is given, but the normal thing is to forget about it and go on to something else. I would place one word of caution, though. It may be that the Lord used that emotional appeal to direct you towards home missions, yet it's not actually Philadelphia that will be the city of your calling."

"You mean I'm not called there?" asked Jimmy.

"No, I'm not saying that either," replied the pastor. "But we certainly do need to take our time in this decision. It's probably one of the biggest you'll ever make. In the meantime, I want you to look at this material on the mother-church concept. After you have looked it over, if you don't believe that this is what God wants, I can accept your decision, but at least I want you to know what your options are. Then if you reject it, you will have done it intelligently. Right now, what you are telling me is that you want to do the hardest kind of home missions work there is. You want to be the founding pastor of a work in a brand-new area. It's an awful big chunk you're wanting to bite off. And another thing. We've gone about as far as we can without including Jeannie in our meetings. She is very much a part of any decisions that you need to make."

"I'm certainly aware of that," said Jimmy.

"You're not discouraged, are you?"

"Well, I'm not disqualified from going yet, am I?"

"No, Jimmy, you're not."

"Well, then, I'm not discouraged," said Jimmy.

"Jimmy, I've got several assignments for you. I have two books I want you to read. The first one is *Planting New Churches* by Jack DeHart. I know that you may not be especially interested in the mother-daughter concept, but he has a good section in there on it, and I want you at least to read about it."

Jimmy nodded that he would.

"The second book is by C. Peter Wagner, called *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest.* In it he gives twelve different ways to start a church."

"Are there really twelve different ways to start a church? This I've got to read!" replied Jimmy.

"Well, I will admit that some of them are more practical than others," said the pastor. "But it is an excellent resource."

"I'll get at both books right away," offered Jimmy obediently.

"The other thing that I want you to do is to study I Timothy and Titus. As you know, these are Pastoral Epistles, and they tell the qualifications of ministry. While they provide guidelines for ministers in general, they can prove especially helpful for someone wanting to launch out into ministry on his own."

"Thanks," said Jimmy. "You've given me a lot to think about."

Jeannie met Jimmy at the door. "Well, how did it go?" she asked enthusiastically.

"Really well," said Jimmy, "and Pastor Johnson wants you to come next time."

"Oh, that's great," said Jeannie. "I'd love it. My mom can babysit Ashley, and I'll tell her that we're having special Bible studies with the pastor. I won't tell her that we're going to start a church until I know if everything is going to work out or not."

"Good idea," said Jimmy. "Pastor Johnson gave me some more homework."

"More books on Pentecostal pioneers?"

"No, I need to do some Bible study on the qualifications of ministry and then read these books on starting churches."

No sooner had Jimmy announced this fact than he plopped down at the kitchen table with his Bible in front

of him. He flipped the pages a few times and then sat scowling over the material. After several minutes he asked, "Hey, honey, where is that Bible commentary?"

"On the bookshelf. I'll get it for you."

"I need to see what it means to be a novice."

"A what?"

"A novice. Paul wrote that a novice shouldn't be a pastor or a bishop. He flipped several pages and then asked, "Honey, do you think I'm a novice?"

"Jimmy, I don't even know what that is supposed to mean."

"Here it is. It says that a novice is someone who has newly come to the faith. I Timothy says that a novice shouldn't be in charge because he might get full of pride and then the devil can destroy him. Well, Jeannie, do you think that I'm a novice?"

"Jimmy, I'm no expert on this stuff, but I don't think you are; otherwise Pastor Johnson wouldn't trust you so much."

"How old should you be to pastor?"

"I don't know, Jimmy. Evidently Pastor Johnson thinks that you might be able to do it, or he probably would have told you to forget it from the very start."

"Sorry to bother you with so many questions. I've just got to know."

Jimmy didn't usually stay up to read in bed, but tonight he wouldn't turn out his reading light. After reading for some time, he turned to Jeannie who was almost asleep and said, "Wagner says, 'There are twelve models for starting churches, but they basically fall into two categories.' "

"Uh huh," said Jeannie, sleepily showing her support.

"The modality model involves a local church that actively tries to birth another congregation. Under this model are hiving off, colonization, the satellite model . . ."

"Jimmy, I really am interested, but could we talk about this in the morning?"

"Sure, sure, but listen to this: Under the sodality category are five different models. There is the mission team, the catalytic church planter, the independent church planter, the apostolic church planter, the founding pastor. Jeannie, if we went to Philadelphia to start a church, that would be what we would do—we'd be under the founding-pastor model."

"That's good, Jimmy, that's really good," she said.

"Now the apostolic church planter is one that starts a church and then . . ." He did not finish his sentence, for Jeannie was sound asleep.

He turned to Jack DeHart's book and read more on the mother-daughter concept.

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Discussion

1. Does God specifically call a person to be a pastor, assistant pastor, or youth leader?
2. Can a person have a calling to home missions and let someone direct him somewhere?
3. Is a burden different from a calling? Can you have a burden and be unqualified? Can you have a calling and be unqualified? Does God call unqualified people?

Assignment

One missionary said, "You are called to reach a group of people. If you are called to reach the people in North American, then you can go to any city and minister." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Use Scripture to back up your argument. Bring your paper to class and prepare for a class discussion on the subject.

Chapter 4

Deciding As a Family

"Do I need a calling, too?"

Jeannie walked into the office shyly and sat down in the chair across from the pastor's desk.

Pastor Johnson welcomed her with a smile and said, "Good evening, Jeannie. So glad you could join us. How is Ashley doing?"

"Just fine. Mom is watching her. She really enjoys her little grandbaby."

"She certainly should. I love mine. If I would have known they were so much fun, I would have skipped having kids and just had grandkids long ago."

Jeannie enjoyed the remark, and Jimmy did too, although he had heard this line before and knew it was a prelude to a "guess what they did now" story about the pastor's grandchildren. But the pastor suddenly became serious and asked Jimmy, "Did you read the material that I gave you on the mother-church concept?"

"Yes, sir, and I shared it with Jeannie, too. I hope you don't mind."

"Excellent," said the pastor. "And what did you think about it?"

"We talked about it, and we're not closed to the idea. It would be great working out of the church here. But . . . um, we would still like to find out more about the possibility of going to Philadelphia, and then if that doesn't work out, we could pray about this."

The pastor's face didn't change expressions, so Jimmy had a hard time reading what he was thinking. Finally Pastor Johnson said, "Good," but it was one of those noncommittal "goods."

"Jeannie, tell me how you feel about this?"

"Pastor Johnson, I'm excited and happy and nervous all at the same time. I have confidence in God that He will help us. Our church is a pretty good size now, but I remember when I was a little girl and we just had a few people. It was a lot different then, but I always felt loved and secure."

"Good," said the pastor with more enthusiasm than before.

"So you feel the same about Philadelphia?"

"I want God's will, certainly. I don't know that God has specifically talked to me about Philadelphia, but I feel good when Jimmy talks about it. Do I need a calling, too?"

"You turned that around, didn't you?" said the pastor with a twinkle in his eye. "I thought I was the one who was supposed to be asking the questions." But his tone was amused more than perturbed. "Jeannie, Jimmy and I talked about callings and sometimes they are pretty hard to define. So I won't try to make you jump through the hoop of someone else's experience. Maybe I'm subconsciously trying to keep you here. I know you'd really be

missed if you left, because I depend on you so much. But I also know that if it is God's will for you to start a church someplace, there would be no happier person than the man sitting behind this desk. I mean that sincerely."

Tears welled up in Jeannie's eyes. "I know you do, and that really means a lot." Jimmy couldn't have described exactly how he felt at that moment because conflicting feelings swept over him all at the same time: love for his pastor, love for his wife, the excitement of a new adventure, and even a loneliness for the church he might be leaving. It was a muddled, bittersweet feeling.

"Now, Jimmy, have you talked together about any fears that you might have?"

"I don't understand," said Jimmy.

"I'm not trying to get you to tear down your faith, but sometimes you can't address a fear until you verbalize it."

"We talked about going," said Jimmy, "but I can't really think of any fears that came to mind."

"Jeannie," asked the pastor, "do you feel at all apprehensive?"

Jeannie sat under the kind gaze of her pastor and seemed relieved to be able to verbalize some things. "Well, I don't know what I'm going to do without Mom," she said biting her lip.

"Yeah, that would be hard," said the pastor, truly sympathetic. "Of all the difficulties of the transition, that would be one of the hardest."

His openness seemed to unlock other feelings. She continued, "And I know Ashley would have friends growing up in the church here, but in a home mis sions work, I'm really not certain how many Pentecostal friends she

would have, particularly in Philadelphia."

The pastor nodded but said nothing. Then he asked, "Do you have any other concerns?"

Jeannie was quiet for a few seconds and then suddenly blurted out, "Oh, Pastor Johnson, I don't play the piano." Her pace and volume increased as she talked. "How can I be a pastor's wife if I don't play the piano?" She couldn't help it, but tears started filling her eyes as she shared her deepest feelings of inadequacy. "And I can't talk to people like Sister Johnson can, and I'm not good with meetings, and I don't have all the grace and charm that Sister Johnson has. Oh, Pastor Johnson, I don't know if I could do it."

"I hear what you're saying, Jeannie," said Pastor Johnson, "and I know how hard it is for you to verbalize these things. But I'm glad you have, because it's important for Jimmy and me to hear them."

Jimmy touched her arm supportively as Pastor Johnson continued to speak. "Thank you for your support and confidence in Sister Johnson. She is a wonderful woman, and I thank God for her often. Also, I'm glad you've shared your concerns about starting a church. It shows that you're being realistic about it. And they are very real concerns. I think it would be foolish of either Jimmy or me to expect you to perform in ministries that you don't feel capable of. But Jeannie, although your gifts may be in different areas, you certainly have a lot to offer. You've worked with Sunday school since you were a teenager, and I know that you love children. Nobody expects you to be another Sister Johnson. God only expects you to be yourself and use the gifts that He has given you.

"Now let me tell you about music. I know of a number

of home missions churches where the pastor's wife didn't play the piano, and they made it just fine. The apostle Paul didn't carry around an electronic keyboard or a Leslie speaker. Let me tell you something. If it is God's will for you to start a church someplace, I have the utmost confidence in both of you that you'll be able to fulfill the calling on your life!

"But that does not mean it is not important what you think. I firmly believe that this must be a mutual decision, and if either one of you is hesitant, it is important for the other one to be patient. Jeannie, if you don't feel it is what God wants you to do as a family or if you have serious doubts about it, Jimmy would do well to back off and wait for God's timing. Certainly he shouldn't try to put you on any guilt trips. I have confidence that you have the ability to do it, but I certainly wouldn't tell you that it is God's will. That's something that can only be known in time and with a lot of prayer."

"Pastor Johnson," said Jeannie, "this isn't just Jimmy's burden. It's mine as well. In my morning devotions, God has spoken to me about being a pastor's wife. It's just that I am really scared that I won't be able to do it."

"That's okay, Jeannie. It's all right. If the truth were known, we all have fears about being successful at what God asks us to do."

Jeannie smiled through her tears and nodded her head. Jimmy broke into a big smile. Pastor Johnson laid his hands on both of them and prayed that God would bless them and open the doors as He saw fit. Before he was done praying, all three of them were weeping.

When they were done praying, Pastor Johnson turned to Jimmy with a probing question. "Are you fiscally able

to start a church right now?"

"Excuse me, sir? I don't think I understand."

"Can you afford to move to a new location in order to start a church?"

"I don't have it all worked out, but I believe that God will provide."

"I believe that too, Jimmy, but He uses flesh-and-blood people in order to accomplish this. For instance, do you know what housing costs are where you plan to move? Are jobs available? Let's start before that. What kind of debt load are you carrying? Do you have a budget, and do you keep it if you do have it?"

"Well, sir, we've always got along pretty well just by using a checkbook and a few charge cards."

"You know, Jimmy, as a home missionary you have less expendable income. You'll really have to watch your pennies."

"I hear what you are saying, Pastor, and I guess Jeannie and I have had one or two big disagreements over money."

"Jimmy, do you carry a balance on your credit cards?"

"Yes, sir."

"How much do you owe?"

"It's manageable. We pay about seventy-five or eighty dollars a month. It varies some."

"What is the outstanding balance?"

"I don't really know. We got that new riding mower last month, so come to think of it, our payment will be higher than what I just said. And there is, uh . . . I'm not sure of how much we owe altogether."

"Jimmy, this book by the Home Missions Division, *Pioneer Evangelism,* contains a section on finances. In

there is a sample budget. I want you to fill it out and bring it back to me. It will be good practice for you. If you become a home missions pastor, you'll be helping most of your new converts get a handle on their finances. But first you have to get a handle on yours."

"Yes, sir."

"Also, if your going to manage the budget for a church, then it makes a lot of sense for you to have your personal finances in order."

"Yes, sir."

"You must have some idea of how much debt you have, Jimmy. If your paycheck went for nothing but to pay off your credit cards, how long would it take you to pay them off?"

"Two or three months, I guess."

"Okay. That will be our first project then," said the pastor. "We'll figure out how to get those bills paid off. You can't work for God freely with all those debts hanging over your head."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

"Now this budget is figured on a four-week month and covers the basic costs that you'll have in running a household," said Pastor Johnson handing him a budget. "It was designed by the Home Missions Division of the United Pentecostal Church for use by their home missionaries. I have another book here that might give you some ideas as well. It's by Larry Burkett, and it's called *Debt-Free Living.* He shares the principles of how to live within your means as well as ideas on how to get out of debt. Financial matters change so quickly that you'll find information in either book that could be updated, but the concepts are constant and can be very useful. This week

you to need to get a list of all your debts, auto loans, credit cards, and anything else that you can think of; and let's take a good look at them to see if there is anything we can do to speed up paying off any items, especially the items that carry a high interest rate. Are you still game, Jimmy?"

"Uh, yes, sir. I guess there is more to it than I thought. But I really want to try."

"Jimmy, if there is anything you can sell to pay off the loans, it will speed you along your way to where you want to be. You and Jeannie need to do this together. It's something that can bring a lot of tension in the family, so it should be done prayerfully."

Jeannie spoke up. "Pastor, what you say makes good sense, whether or not we enter into home missions work. I think we would both feel a lot better if we were out of debt."

That night Jimmy read the first few chapters of the book, *Debt Free Living* by Larry Burkett. He grimaced several times as he continued to flip the pages. "Jeannie," he said looking up, "this is painful stuff to read."

"What do you mean?"

"Only that I see so much of myself in some of these stories. As yet I haven't charged us to the point of bankruptcy, but I don't know that I've ever considered God's principles either."

"Come on now. You're not trying to make yourself into some sort of sinner, are you?"

"Not exactly, but I can see that my compulsiveness in buying has caused a lot of the struggles that we've had financially."

"What do you mean?"

"There was a fellow in this story who did exactly what I did. When his used car was giving him problems, he went out and surprised his wife with a brand-new one."

"Oh, yeah," said Jeannie, still sounding a little mad. "That was quite a surprise."

"In the book it identified his true motive—it was ego. He felt bad that he had a better car in high school than after they were married, and he felt like he deserved it."

"So what did he do in the book?" she asked flatly.

"I don't know yet. I haven't read that far. But I can see that the way that I've been spending money might be a real hindrance to being able to fulfill God's will in our lives."

"Well, Pastor Johnson was right about one thing," she said. "This is certainly an emotional issue."

"Jeannie, I promise you by God's help I'm gonna change." Jimmy put down the book and turned out the reading light by his bed.

All was quiet for a brief time before Jimmy's voice sounded from the stillness. "How much do you think we could get for that riding lawn mower?"

"I'm not sure."

"Jeannie, why don't you and sit down tomorrow night and figure out exactly what we owe? Then we can decide together what will be the best course of action to take overall."

"Do you know what, Jimmy Porter?" came a soft voice in the dark. "I love you."

"Do you know what, Jeannie Porter? I love you, too."

The next Tuesday Jeannie and Jimmy sat in front of the pastor with a file folder bulging with bills and information.

"Pastor Johnson, if we used our present payment schedule and didn't purchase one more thing on credit, it would take us four years to get out of debt," said Jimmy.

"But, Pastor," said Jeannie, "we've got a plan to help us get out of debt faster." She handed him two charts, one showing their outstanding debt and how that was to be paid, and another one showing their monthly budget. The pastor looked keenly at the papers, nodding his head while perusing each item on the list.

"How are you going to go from a car payment of 475 dollars a month to a 100 and something?" he asked sincerely.

"Well," said Jeannie sincerely, "we figured that with my parents helping, we really wouldn't need two cars for now. And Dad said that he would sell us their second car cheaply, so it wouldn't be a problem to bring our monthly car payment down real low."

"Ah, so you've talked to your parents about your plans to move away and start a church?"

"Not yet," said Jeannie. "We didn't want to upset them prematurely. We only told them that you're working with us to try to get a handle on our debts. And they thought that was a great idea."

"Hmmm, I see," said the pastor not betraying any feeling in his voice. He looked down at the papers again.

"What's this hospital payment?" he asked.

"That's what the insurance didn't pay on Ashley when she was hospitalized," said Jimmy.

"Have you sent them anything yet?" asked the pastor..

"Not yet."

"Well, see if you can stretch out your payment to them. They don't charge interest; and generally if you

send something consistently, they will accept a minimal payment."

"Sounds good," said Jimmy. "Then we can use the money that we budgeted for the hospital payment to help pay off a credit card faster."

"Now you've got the idea."

"How come you have so much budgeted here for food?" asked the pastor.

"With both of us working, we have to eat out a lot," said Jimmy.

"Jimmy," said the pastor, "I have a firm conviction that if men would help their wives more around the house with the chores it would give them more freedom to fix things in the kitchen. I'm not going to ask you how much you help, but most men don't help enough. And I know that you enjoy going out to eat on Sunday afternoons, but Jeannie, your mom makes a mean pot roast." Pastor Johnson said all this with a twinkle in his eye, and that made it a lot easier to handle.

"I like it that you are still giving to foreign missions—not an extravagant amount, but enough to help you remember that the world is a whole lot bigger than the place where you are."

Jimmy spoke up. "There's one more thing that might help, Pastor Johnson. Ever since I've been in the church, I felt that I needed to be the head of the home when I got married. I thought that this included making all of the major financial decisions myself and taking care of the checkbook. I see now that financial decisions need to be mutual decisions. And another thing I've discovered, Pastor Johnson. Larry Burkett talked about husbands and wives having different gifts. He wrote that the family

should utilize the gifts of each when figuring the finances. In cases where the wife was more suited, he recommended that she handle the checking account. From now on, I'm going to have Jeannie balance the checkbook and pay the bills. She's a penny pincher and a whole lot more detailed minded than I am."

When Jimmy finished, Pastor Johnson leaned back on his chair and smiled. "If I didn't know better, I'd say that you had matured about five years in a week's time."

Jimmy wasn't sure how to handle the remark. Finally he said, "Pastor Johnson, should we forget about becoming home missionaries until we get a good handle on our debt?"

"Jimmy, you'll never get rid of bills in your life. That's not what this is all about. There are two extremes that people take, and both of them are mistakes. On the one hand, some people will move to a city burdened with debts, and just "have faith" that God will see them through with no practical plan to pay their way. That's wrong. On the other hand, I've got anywhere from a half a dozen to a dozen people in this congregation who have some kind of call on their lives, but they won't do anything for the Lord until they are more financially set. Some of these people have not changed their lifestyle one iota, and the truth is that they'll never be financially set. But down deep, that's all right with them because it keeps them from having to face up to those hard choices. You and Jeannie are already working for God, and these financial changes you are making will free you up to do even more for Him, whether you start a home missions church or not. But having debt should not keep you from planning. In fact, any sort of move, especially one that is of long distance, re-

quires months of planning anyway, so it is important to explore your options in starting a church at the very same time as you are working on your bills."

"I see," said Jeannie, and both of them waited for what the pastor would say next.

Pastor Johnson opened the top drawer of his desk and pulled out what appeared to be a miniature telephone book. He opened it to the front and said, "Let's see here, Pennsylvania . . . okay, here it is. Look at this. The home missions director is David Peters; I knew him from when I used to live in Texas." He turned back further in the book and looked something else up, and in the time it takes to tell about it he was involved in a conversation with someone on the other end of the line.

"Yeah, it's good to hear your voice again, too," he said.

"Doing fine, and you?"

"Uh, huh. Yeah, I'm still in Kansas. How about you? Are you still working as the home missions director there in Pennsylvania? . . . Good. That's really the reason that I'm calling you."

"Me . . . no I'm quite happy where I am, but I do have a young couple from my church who may be interested in starting a church in the Philadelphia area. I was wondering what you could tell me about it."

"Yeah, I know about the Liberty Bell," Pastor Johnson said laughing. "Come on, I'm serious."

"Uh huh, well, what do you want to know about them? Uh huh . . . I see. No, they're middle class, got one kid. They're some of the best young people I've got. His name is Jimmy—he's had his local license about nine months. . . . No, never pastored. . . ."

"You sure? You wouldn't send them there? Uh huh . . . Oh, I see what you are saying . . . Well, sure, that makes a lot of sense. And they need to fill out a preliminary application? Oh . . . I see. Can you send it to me? But you wouldn't send them to Philadelphia? Okay, I understand."

Perturbed looks crossed the faces of Jimmy and Jeannie. All sorts of irrational thoughts flooded Jimmy's mind: How could their vision die so quickly? How could the man on the phone think they weren't qualified when he didn't even know anything about them? Maybe God told him about all the bills they owed. . . . Maybe they shouldn't have children in Philadelphia. . . . Maybe the man on the phone was against young people. He probably thought they weren't capable.

"Yeah, that makes a lot of sense," said Pastor Johnson.

"I'll see what they think of that. Oh, I don't think they'll mind—they're pretty pliable. . . ."

Jimmy scowled. Now Pastor Johnson was in on it. Pastor Johnson let that other fellow take them right out of God's will in about thirty seconds. None of this seemed the least bit fair.

"All right, then, it's good talking to you. And I'll be waiting for that home missions application. I'll get back to you when I get it. Thanks."

And with that, Pastor Johnson hung up the phone, leaned forward, and smiled. Jimmy couldn't wait any longer, so he asked, "Well, what did he say?"

"Quite a lot," responded the pastor. "The first thing anyone needs to do if they are going into the Pennsylvania District as a home missionary is to fill out a preliminary

application. I guess a lot of districts are going to this kind of policy now. It lets them find out about you before you have a lot of money and time invested into planning and preparation."

"I see," said Jimmy, not really seeing very well.

"Jimmy, the home missions director, Brother Peters, had some rather important input about your going to Philadelphia. Even though Philadelphia means 'the city of brotherly love' it certainly doesn't live up to its name. Most of it is a pretty rough area, and he was sure that the culture shock would be tremendous for someone coming from the Midwest, particularly someone who has never pastored before."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy pitying himself.

"Well," continued the pastor, "almost the entire metro area of Philadelphia is unreached. Depending on how you figure it, someone has estimated that there is one United Pentecostal Church for about a million people. The home missions director said that it might be better for you to start a church in one of the suburban communities that would be more like the Midwest. He suggested one small city called West Chester, which is near the city of Philadelphia. He said it was a beautiful little town, and it might be more what you need as a family."

Jimmy eyed his pastor thoughtfully. He was greatly relieved that in fact they might still be eligible to go, but he wondered if he was being steered somewhere that was second best or that wasn't really God's calling. "How far is it from Philadelphia?" he asked.

"Ah, here is a great opportunity for a homework assignment," said the pastor. "I'll tell you what. You do some exploration. Get out a map, call the Chamber of

Commerce and ask for any information that they might have, including demographic information about the ethnic diversity in the community. Send for a newspaper from the city, and anything else you can think of to find out about the city from a distance. When the application comes from the home missions department, I'll help you fill it out, and we can proceed from there.

"In the meantime, you've got a lot to think and pray about. You can be working on some of those bills as well. As soon as you know more, we'll meet again and take the next step. Now, Jimmy, if at any time you feel the Lord checking you, or you sense some sort of caution, don't feel that you've gone too far to say that this is not what your going to do right now. Let's prayerfully walk through doors as God opens them."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy meekly.

Bibliography

Burkett, Larry, *Debt-Free Living.* Chicago: Moody Press, 1989.

"Making a Budget." *Pioneer Evangelism.* Hazelwood, MO: General Home Missions Division, UPCI, 1990.

Discussion

1. Someone has said, "When you marry a man, you marry his calling." Is this true? Write a paper on the following: Should a potential home missionary wife feel a calling for a specific place? Why or why not? What should she do if she feels that her husband is making a mistake? How does Ephesians 5:21-33 relate to this situation?

2. Who ministers to ministers? Write on the following: What would a pastor and his wife do if they had a conflict that seemed unsolvable? Does God protect families in ministry from having such conflicts? Can somebody know before he or she is married if there is a strong potential for conflict? If so, how? If not, why not?

At some point in a relationship, communication between male and females can break down because of the difference in genders, a difference that men often do not understand. While a man is usually task orientated, a woman often looks at things more holistically. A man may even look at a relationship as a task to be handled. Do research on male/female differences and how they are communicated. Possible resources include the following:

Dobson, James. *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women.* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1975.

Hardesty, Margeret. *Your Husband and Your Emotional Needs.* Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1980.

Smalley, Gary, and John Trent. *The Language of Love: A Powerful Way to Maximize Insight, Intimacy, and Understanding.* Pomona, CA: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1988.

Tanenbaum, Joe. *Male and Female Realities, Understanding the Opposite Sex.* Incline Village, NV: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990.

Assignment

One of the greatest needs for young couples is to have control of their finances. Study the method of making a monthly budget as outlined in *Pioneer Evangelism,* pages 28-31. Although the figures on the sample budget aren't

applicable, the principles in the chapter are certainly relevant.

Role-playing

Work out a tentative budget for a young married couple. Bring this sample budget to class for discussion.

Chapter 5

Facing the Facts of the Field

"The rent costs are double"

As soon as they got home, Jimmy was on the telephone. "Who are you talking to?" asked Jeannie.

"Uh, yes," he said in the telephone, "I need a telephone number in West Chester; I need the number of the Chamber of Commerce. Uh huh. Okay. 215-696-4046. Good. Thank you."

"Jimmy, it's ten-thirty at night. It's an hour later out on the East Coast. There is not going to be anyone at the Chamber of Commerce this time of night."

"I know that. I'm just getting ready so that I can call tomorrow."

A minute later he was on the phone again. "I would like the number, please, for the Chamber of Commerce in Philadelphia."

The next morning he was on the phone again. "Hello,

do you have any information that I could receive about the city?"

"For relocation?"

"Uh, yes."

"Sure, we have a packet that we make up for people who are relocating to the city. We'd be happy to send it to you."

"Good. Do you have any information on demographics as well?"

"Yes, we do. It's all in the booklet."

"Thanks. Does your city have a newspaper?"

"Yes, we do."

"Is there any way that you could send me a copy of the paper?"

"I'm sorry; you have to subscribe at the newspaper."

"Well, I was just looking for a complimentary copy or something."

"You'll still have to call the newspaper. Do you want their number?"

"Yes, please."

"698-1775 . . . Oh, and make sure that you get the paper on a good day. Otherwise you won't get much."

"What day is a good day?"

"Sunday's the best."

"Thanks. I appreciate it. Bye now."

"Hello, I'd like to have a Sunday paper sent to me, please."

"Just a minute. I'll transfer you to circulation."

"I don't want to subscribe. I just want one paper."

"You'll still need to speak to someone in circulation."

"Thanks. Hello, circulation?"

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

"Yes, ma'am; I'd like to order a Sunday paper."

"Are you in the county?"

"No, ma'am; I'm out of state."

"Two dollars and fifty cents for every Sunday paper you want sent. It will be mailed, and you can expect it least two days after the date on the paper."

"Thanks. Can I get the address from you?"

"250 W. Bradfor Ave, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 19392."

"I'm sorry, ma'am. I don't even know the name of your paper."

"Daily Local News."

"Thanks. I'll get that check to you right away."

"Hello, Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, could you send me some infor mation on the city? Anything that you've got for relocation. Umm . . . I guess it would be both residential and commercial. Do you have any information on demographics? . . . Yes, I'll hold while you transfer me. Hello, can you send me information on demographics of the Philadelphia area? Ten dollars? What all does it include? . . . Uh huh . . . Philadelphia metro area and the entire Delaware Valley? Uh huh . . . this was recently updated . . . . How soon can you send it to me? Oh, I see. As soon as I send the ten dollars? Okay, what is your address? Sure, I'll send you a check for ten dollars. Right, I understand that you can't send it free. . . . I understand. . . . Does that include information on different ethnic groups and where they are concentrated? . . . Yes, I'm serious. . . . Well, then, who would have that information? . . . Well, surely somebody must. . . . Thank you. Yes I'm still interested in it."

"Friendly lady," he said sarcastically to no one in par-

ticular. Jimmy wound up ordering a couple of editions of the *Philadelphia Inquirer,* one of the Philadelphia newspapers. He was still interested in West Chester, but if God wanted him to go to Philadelphia after all, he wanted as much information on it as possible. Besides, he needed to explore other options. What if God wanted him to go to another city in the Philadelphia area?

Information from the West Chester Chamber of Commerce arrived first. Actually, it only took three days to get there. The booklet was full of general information, statistical information, and beautiful colored pictures. It presented West Chester as an old, traditional town with a stable population and a cheaper cost of living than most of the Philadelphia area. Pictures showed rural settings with a man fishing in a stream and a few historical buildings.

Several days later, Jeannie was bringing in the mail and brought in a fat newspaper. She opened the wrapping and looked closely at the newspaper. "What's this?" she asked Jimmy.

"Well, I, uh, thought as long as I was getting newspapers I would sort of find out as much information about the whole area as I could. I sent for a couple of copies of the *Philadelphia Inquirer.*"

"I see," said Jeannie a little suspiciously. She opened the front page all the way and read about two murders and a scandal in city government. "Look at this, Jimmy. A man was knifed at 2:00 a.m. on the 1100 block of 57th Street, and his mutilated body . . ."

"Can't you read about something else?" he suggested.

"Here on page two it says that Philadelphia has surpassed New York City in poor air quality."

"Do you mind if I read the paper? After all, I am the one who sent for it."

"Sure, no problem. I was just reading that brochure from the Chamber of Commerce in West Chester, anyway."

Jimmy read his paper privately while Jeannie leafed through the brochure about West Chester. "Well, look at that," said Jeannie invitingly. "It sure looks pretty."

"Uh huh," said the voice from behind the newspaper.

"Yeah, it's not what I thought the East Coast would be like at all, particularly any place near Philadelphia."

"Sounds nice," a voice said blandly.

"Look at all the woods and wildlife," said Jeannie. "I wonder if they really catch fish like that out there?"

Jimmy quietly folded the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and set it on the floor. He walked over and looked at the fish. He made no comment but leaned closer as if to examine it fully.

"The city sure looks quaint," said Jeannie. "I wonder if anything historic happened in the town?" With that, Jimmy joined her on the sofa. He searched through the next page before announcing, "Look here, there is a historic marker in West Chester where Lafayette reviewed the American troops . . . but I doubt if there was much danger."

"How come?"

"It says here that the marker is dated July 26, 1835 . . . that's fifty years after the Revolutionary War."

Jeannie laughed. "Is there anything else?"

"Well, West Chester is where the Lenape Indian Tribe camped before William Penn came to Pennsylvania and started granting land," he offered again.

"Is there a historic marker there?"

"Evidently not. It says here, 'A local Burger King sits atop one ancient Indian ground; a university dorm above another.' "

"I love it," said Jeannie, laughing. "This is going to be great!"

The next day, the *Daily Local News* arrived from West Chester, and Jimmy was pleasantly surprised. The Chamber of Commerce had been almost apologetic about the paper, but it had more news articles than his own hometown paper; and besides that, it was filled with items of local interest. It was very impressive. Jimmy looked through the want ads for employment possibilities and through the real estate section. Suddenly Jeannie heard a concerned cry from behind the paper. "I can't believe this! The rent costs are double what we're paying now."

"But I thought that West Chester cost a lot less than most of the Philadelphia metro area."

"Well, that's what the booklet from the Chamber of Commerce said. And I don't suppose they could publish it if wasn't true. The East Coast is sure expensive. It looks like people earn more in hourly wages, but certainly not double of what we're earning!"

"Well, it probably all works out the same," said Jeannie, trying to console him.

As the weeks passed, more newspapers came; Jimmy studied the large map of the Philadelphia area that was sent to him and seemed to be continually on the phone to try to get more information.

"What are you working on?" asked Jeannie.

"Well, I was checking out several other possible locations," said Jimmy. And he did. It looked like the city of

Chester might be affordable, but Brother Peters told him that it was a rather rough area. He didn't think that would prevent him from going, but Brother Johnson and Brother Peters advised him against it, particularly since he had never pastored before. As he explained each new revelation to Jeannie, she remained aloof.

"I'm looking at the city of Swathmore this week," said Jimmy.

"Oh, really," said Jeannie trying to sound only casually interested.

"Yeah. Swathmore looks like a strategic area, but I'm not really sure we can afford it. I guess it must be a rather exclusive area."

"Oh, I see," said Jeannie, who almost sounded happy it didn't seem to work out. "Do you have any other ideas?"

"Several—west of the city is not so bad, depending on what area you go in."

"Uh huh."

Jimmy continued to explore the map. Several times he made phone calls, but Jeannie decided not to ask him any more questions. Each day Jeannie found herself looking in the booklet from West Chester and rereading the newspapers. For several days, Jimmy didn't touch that material, and he seemed to grow more and more withdrawn.

Meanwhile, good things were happening for them financially. They were able to make some unexpected dents in their indebtedness. Jimmy's brother-in- law was glad to get the riding lawn mower and take over the payments. He had borrowed it once and loved the way it handled; it was perfect for his big yard. And if that

wasn't good enough, when Jimmy talked to the credit depart ment at the hospital, they told him about a service that might help him with his bill; and besides that, they agreed to lower the total if he would make consistent payments.

They sold both cars and bought Jeannie's mom's car. It ran fairly well, but it was really hard for them to be without a second car. Jeannie felt it more than Jimmy because she was the one who usually got left without transportation, but most of the time she was able to deal with the inconvenience when she remembered that the money formerly going on the payments was now being applied directly to their bills.

Jeannie couldn't help noticing that Jimmy seemed quieter than usual, almost depressed. Pastor Johnson warned them in one of their sessions that changes in their lifestyle would bring increased stress, even if they were good changes, so Jeannie didn't say anything or try to address it. But it wasn't getting any better. One night at supper Jimmy just sat staring at his dinner salad and dinner plate.

"Jimmy, did I cook the cheeseburgers too long?" she said.

"Oh, no, they're fine."

"Do you want a different kind of salad dressing?"

"No, its fine."

"Wrong color plates?" she asked smiling.

He half smiled but said nothing.

"Jimmy, you've got to tell me what's bothering you. Did I do something wrong?"

"Jeannie, you didn't do anything. It's just that . . . well, that . . . I don't think I like West Chester!"

"Oh," said Jeannie cautiously, "what do you mean?"

"I'm still interested in home missions in the Philadelphia area, but West Chester is simply not Philadelphia, and the idea of moving to a little town instead of moving to where millions of souls are lost without God doesn't make sense. I'm willing to sacrifice, but I want that sacrifice to count. Jeannie, it just seems like if we went to that small of a town I would be out of the will of God. I can't think of one advantage of going there."

"I can think of a couple," said Jeannie defensively. "It seems like it might be cheaper than other places, it's close to a lot of people, and it seems like it might be a homey environment."

"I'm not looking for a homey place, I'm looking for souls." And suddenly he spoke angrily. "There is not one reason we should live in that little town and not Philadelphia."

"But, Jimmy," consoled Jeannie, "it's a small town, and it will be perfect for raising Ashley."

"We're talking souls here," said Jimmy. "How are we going to reach the world if you only have seventeen thousand people in your town. If I wanted small, I could have stayed in the Midwest."

"But look at all the little towns around it. There are lots and lots of people to reach all around West Chester. I'm sure the opportunities will be there to win a lot of people to the Lord."

"But I'm an hour from Philadelphia, and how can I reach its millions if I'm not there? People from the city do not commute out to a little town in order to go to church!"

"Fine," she said, but now she was angry, and her

voice was challenging. "You want to reach the bums and druggies on the street? So commute once a week and pass out food at a bread line." She hadn't meant to speak so harshly, but it just came out. "Jimmy! Don't you think God could be opening up the door for us to go to West Chester?"

"I just don't want to compromise my calling!"

"But there are souls in West Chester, aren't there? Why don't you . . ."

"Jeannie, you just don't understand!" he said in a voice choked with emotion. "I'm sorry. We'll talk about this when I get back." And with that, he slammed the front door soundly and walked to the car. He was on his way to talk to Pastor Johnson.

It was the only major fight they had while they were planning their future, but Jimmy felt condemned as he drove to the church.

Fortunately Pastor Johnson was still at church. "I've just got to talk to you," said Jimmy bursting into his office. Jimmy exploded with emotion as he told of his confrontation with Jeannie. He guiltily confessed that he had gotten angry but then came to his own defense by suggesting that Jeannie was not being very submissive. "And if I can't even keep my family in order, how can I expect to reach a city, Pastor Johnson?"

Pastor Johnson smiled and leaned back in his swivel chair. He looked as if he were about to laugh, and Jimmy knew it. It wasn't fair that Pastor Johnson was amused at the expense of his marital crises. "Now this is serious business," Jimmy said. "I need your help."

Pastor Johnson nodded, now appropriately somber. "West Chester is really that small, huh?"

"Yes, sir, it says it right here in the brochure from the Chamber of Commerce."

"Uh, let me see that brochure, Jimmy."

Jimmy carried it around to the back of the desk. "See here, there are less than twenty thousand people in the city. You could hardly even call it a city. And I'm thirty miles from Philadelphia. How does that home missions director from Pennsylvania expect us to reach the world in these little towns?"

"Do they have a school there?"

"Yes," said Jimmy. "It looks like they have a university there."

"Do the population figures include the school or not?"

"Probably not. That would be a more transient population."

"Doesn't it take several colleges collectively to make a university?"

"I guess so."

"Well, Jimmy, I wonder how many students they have there?"

"I don't know. That might be something to explore."

"You know, universities often have students from other countries. I personally know of foreign students who were won to the Lord and who went back to their own country and had a great impact. It was almost like foreign missions work right at home. Of course, if you're not interested in this, I can understand. I mean, you've got to remember the burden that God has given you."

There was a lightness in his voice, and Jimmy knew that Pastor Johnson was teasing him. If they hadn't been so close, it would have been easy to be upset with his pastor.

"Pastor Johnson, I'm not mad at anybody. But nobody seems to want to listen to me. How can I fulfill a calling to the city of Philadelphia if everyone keeps directing me away from it?"

"Jimmy, let me speak very plainly. There is nobody against you winning souls. And I certainly don't think there is anyone against reaching the Philadelphia area. But God can speak through human voices as well as speaking directly to you. Remember, we are just seeing what doors God will open. I personally like the idea of your going to a city that is similar to the one you were raised in. It increases your chances of success. You're a young man, and the chances of your going to a metropolis like Philadelphia and succeeding are not as great as they would be somewhat later in your ministry.

"Being in the ministry is not like staking out a claim and then mining for gold in your own mine. It is like war. You are going to the battlefront to rescue souls for the Lord, not to build yourself a kingdom or get a bag of gold. There is no one more thrilled than I that you may be used by God in this endeavor. You would be the third young man to leave our congregation to start a church. I wish for a dozen more. I don't want you to go to Philadelphia to start a church. I want you to go to that area and start as many churches as you can. It's too close to the Rapture, and there is too much work to be done to think small.

"But let me tell you something, Jimmy. You need everyone on your side if you are going to be successful, and you need to heed the advice of those around you. Why do you think God gave you a wife? So you could tell her what to do? Is it possible that God could speak to her as well? It is not just you who will be starting the church.

You will be doing it as a family. It's important for a woman to know that her husband regards her opinion. While I don't fault you for having a disagreement, I think it is very important for you to affirm to Jeannie that her opinion is very important and that you are willing to listen to her. I doubt that you will be successful unless she feels that you are a team working together for the Lord.

"You haven't even visited the city to give it a chance. How do you know how you'll feel about it until you walk the streets, talk to the people, and feel the heartbeat of the city? Don't you think you might be a little unflexible here?"

Jimmy never remembered Pastor Johnson speaking so sternly to him. Tears welled up in his eyes. "I have been rather pig-headed, haven't I?"

Pastor Johnson smiled. "I love ya, Jimmy," he said sincerely.

The car pulled up in front of the house, and Jimmy walked in the front door more meekly than he left. Jeannie was waiting for him there. He could tell she had been crying. "Oh, Jimmy, I'm so sorry for how I acted. I've been praying while you were gone, and I told the Lord I would go anywhere He sent us. I don't care where it is."

"Jeannie, I'm the one who was wrong. Would you forgive me for being insensitive to your feelings? I've treated you like your opinions don't count, and God has shown me that we need to be partners in . . ."

He had no time to say more before the phone rang. Jeannie grabbed it on the second ring. "Hello. Oh, Mom. Yes, how are you? Yes . . . if you could watch her Saturday that would be great. That's still okay, isn't it? . . . Hmmm, all right, thanks, Mom; can I call you back in a

little bit? Uh huh. Oh, you're calling to check out a rumor? What do you mean? That Jimmy and I are doing what? Who did you hear that from? Uh huh. Well, settle down, Mom. Let me explain. Sissy was the only one I told, and she wasn't supposed to say any thing. We really don't know anything for sure, and there is a chance that we won't be moving anywhere. Well, yes, we are looking into it. Yes, Pastor Johnson has talked to us about it, and he is still talking to us about it. I know we have debts, but we're working on them. . . . Well, it's not certain that we're moving right in Philadelphia. . . . Yes, Mom. I know that we're young. Oh, Mom, I'm sorry we couldn't have talked to you first because . . ."

Jimmy gently took the phone from Jeannie and spoke into the receiver. "Sister Smith, this is Jimmy. First of all, I want to apologize to you and Brother Smith about not seeking your counsel on this matter earlier. There is a whole list of people that we're going to need input from in order to pro ceed, and you and Brother Smith are at the top of the list. You've been in the church so long and I'm so new that I'm sure we can use all the advice we can get. . . . You really think so? Well, that's kind of you to think so. . . . No, ma'am, we weren't really thinking of Philadelphia, but a beautiful little town out in the country, thirty miles from the city. . . . Yes, ma'am. Why don't you and Brother Smith stop over after church tomorrow night for some ice cream, and we can talk some more about it. . . . Well, if you could, I'd be grateful, because we wouldn't want to do anything without your blessing. You're very special to us. . . . Oh, you think so? Well, thank you for saying that. I think about the smartest thing I ever did was marry Jeannie. . . . Oh, okay, then we'll

talk some more after church tomorrow night."

Jimmy hung up the phone and looked at Jeannie. Tears flowed down both their cheeks as they embraced.

Discussion

The instructor can divide the class into two parts, assigning individuals to a particular side. The question to be discussed is: Should a home missionary focus on reaching a different ethnic group or culture than his own?

One side should argue that since foreign missionaries do it, a home missionary is also capable of the very same thing. God is not limited. If He calls a person to a locale, He will help him reach whatever groups are within the area.

The other side should argue that it makes more sense for a home missionary to first reach within his own culture. A lot of unnecessary time and effort can be wasted in trying to reach those with a dissimilar background. If God opens the door, then fine; but this should not be the focus of one's ministry initially.

The instructor should summarize the positions and compare the points that are made on each side. This discussion should serve as a good springboard for the following assignment.

Assignment

Select a cross section of cities, both large and small. Contact the Chamber of Commerce and see what information is available. How much would it cost to live in the community? What sort of socioeconomic group could a home missionary expect to reach? Is this sort of focus possible to assess without a visit to the area? What addi-

tional information could be obtained by a visit? What could only be known by actually moving to an area? Based on his research, the student should write a paper that summarizes his findings. Included in the paper should be a discussion of how such a place would influence the family (present or projected).

Chapter 6

Job Factors

"Should I sell vacuum cleaners?"

The next Tuesday, Jimmy and Jeannie sat in Pastor Johnson's office, ready for their session. The pastor didn't address any of the discussion of the previous week. He seemed engrossed in thought and said suddenly, "Jimmy, what would be the ideal employment for a home missions pastor?"

"I'm not sure," replied Jimmy, taken aback.

"Well, let me ask you this then," said the pastor. "Should the home missionary be in sales or service?"

"Huh?" said Jimmy dumbly.

"Should he be involved in a 'people' business or a 'thing' business; that is, should he be interacting with people on his job or should he be involved with doing things with his hands, like for instance, working as a janitor or repairing fiberglass."

Jimmy thought that Pastor Johnson might be goading him, so he decided to play along with whatever game the

pastor was up to, but he suspected that whatever answer he gave, it would probably be wrong. "Well, Pastor Johnson," he said, "I believe the right thing to do would be to go into sales, because I could meet more people."

"Would you sell used cars?" asked Pastor Johnson.

"I'm not sure. . . ."

"Would you sell vacuum cleaners door to door?"

Jimmy laughed. "I don't know. It depends on how hungry I got. Are you saying that some things are easier or more appropriate to sell as a home missionary pastor?"

"I'm just asking questions, Jimmy."

"It would be proper to say, then, that the more accepted a certain product was, the better it would be to sell."

"I think that's true. Tell me, Jimmy. Have you ever worked in sales before?"

"Well, before I started as the night manager at the grocery store, I was a telemarketer. It wasn't exactly door-to-door sales, but I had to persuade the customer to take the credit card. We never used the terms buying or selling, but in effect they would certainly be purchasing the service."

"How did you do?"

"Fairly well. I was always one of their top sales people."

"Why did you switch jobs?"

"Well, it was pretty demanding. I'd come home emotionally exhausted."

"Would you pick that same kind of job as a home missionary?"

"I'd do it if I had to," said Jimmy, "but it wouldn't be my first choice. There were other guys who could sell

better than I could. And they didn't seem bothered by the pressure at all. Maybe if I was more like them, I could handle that sort of job. It certainly had good incentive programs. But I don't think I could handle the strain of that job and still have the energy I needed to start a church."

"Would you consider some other kind of sales job?"

"One time I thought about selling insurance. I understand there is pretty good commission on that. I'm not sure, though. That might be pretty intense, too."

"You know, Jimmy," said Pastor Johnson, "I have friends who were home missionaries and who told me that they were able to meet people by being involved in sales work and that because they worked on commission it helped them to have more time with their church, but I was never a very good sales person, and I had a hard time mixing my selling the gospel with selling other products. I don't think there is a right or wrong answer. A lot depends on what is available and the personality of the home missionary.

"But there is certainly nothing wrong with working with your hands either. The apostle Paul was a tent maker, and he supported himself on a number of missionary endeavors by the work of his own hands.

"Should a home missionary's wife work?"

"If she could be at home with her child that would be nice. It might even give her more time for planning church activities," Jeannie offered tentatively.

"Jeannie," said Pastor Johnson, "what kind of work should a home missionary's wife be involved in?"

"I'm not sure," replied Jeannie. "I like doing work with computers, and I like my job at the hospital."

"It's tough, sometimes," said Pastor Johnson. "I know that your mother does a good job of babysitting Ashley, but if you were going to work you'd probably have to find someone you could trust to babysit Ashley, and of course, they wouldn't do it for free."

"It's something to think about," said Jeannie.

"Jimmy, I called the home missions director from Pennsylvania again, and I asked him what he would recommend for employment for a home missionary."

"You called Brother Peters?" asked Jimmy in amazement. "Did he get me a job?"

"He's not an employment agency," said Pastor Johnson laughing. "I just called for ideas."

"What did he say?"

"He had several good suggestions. For one thing, there is a man who lives right there in Pennsylvania who has trained a number of home missiona ries in how to install drapes. Evidently, it's easy and can be very profit able."

"Really?"

"Yes. Another idea he suggested was that you might consider piano tuning."

"Piano tuning?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes. He knows of several home missionaries who have used it. I guess you can learn the trade fairly easily. One of our ministers offers a course that you can order by mail, and I guess you can make pretty good money at it."

"I can use the money. I know that."

"Other suggestions he gave me included doing plastics repair, fiberglass repair, or window tinting."

"How do I get more information?"

"The Home Missions Division has a brochure that contains a current list of possible vocations."

"How do I get it?"

"Here," said Pastor Johnson, tearing off the top copy of his notepad. "The address is 8855 Dunn Road, Hazelwood, MO 63042 and the telephone number is 314-837-7300. Call them some time this week and ask for it."

"Great. Are you suggesting that if I move to the city to start a church, I should work for myself?"

"Perhaps not at first," responded Pastor Johnson. "These are just suggestions of businesses that might make you more independent. Your primary criteria for choosing employment will be something that will support your family while giving you the maximum time to work for the Lord.

"Some professions carry a certain stigma. I don't know that I would suggest being a sanitation engineer, certainly not if people identified you with that vocation publicly. But beyond that there are very few hard and fast rules. Some people do well at sales and people business, while others find that this takes away too much emotional energy from ministry, which is certainly a people business.

"The best that I can suggest is that you pray about a vocation and ask God to open doors. In the meantime, contact the Home Missions Division and ask them to send you the brochure on possible vocations for home missionaries."

Jimmy folded the piece of paper that Pastor Johnson had given him and put it in his pocket. The next morning he dialed 314-837-7300.

"Good morning, World Evangelism Center."

"Hello. Uh, is this where I call to talk to the Home Missions Division?"

"One second and I'll connect you."

Activities

Either the instructor or a student should call the General Home Missions Division to get a current list of jobs recommended as possibilities. Once the list is obtained, students can contact the various people that are recommended and present an oral report to the class on the information that is obtained.

Discussion

Someone has said that the job of a home missionary's wife is to do everything that he doesn't get done. Perhaps that is a bit overstated, and each woman has unique gifts that will focus her ministry. Yet there are cer tain tasks that seem to be rather common to every home missionary wife. Have some students create what they feel would be a job description for a home missionary's wife. The following sources are recommended:

Buckingham, Michele, editor. *Help! I'm a Pastor's Wife.* Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1986.

Haney, Joy. *The Privileged Woman.* Stockton, CA: Radiant Life Publications, 1984.

Haney, Joy. *The Radiant Woman. Volume I.* Stockton, CA: Radiant Life Publications, 1984.

Mains, Karen Burton. *Open Heart, Open Home.* New York City, NY: NAL-Dutton, 1980.

White, Ruth. *What Every Pastor's Wife Should Know.* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1988.

Assignment

Write a paper covering the following information. What are my gifts? (For example, do you find it easy to talk to people? Are you detail minded? Do you like to work with your hands?)

Next, either write on the role of a minister's wife, using sources such as those listed above, or write about types of employment that a minister or a minister's wife could seek when starting a church.

Contact a college or technical school to see what career guidance resources it has, and collect information in the area of your interest. As an introduction to your paper, explain your rationale for the career subject on which you chose to write.

Chapter 7

Preliminary Steps

"I'll help you fill this out"

When Pastor Johnson received the preliminary application from the Pennsylvania District, he called Jimmy into his office in order to go over it with him. "Jimmy, if you decide that you want to go to West Chester, you'll need to meet with the district home missions board and the district board in order to obtain approval. Some of the same questions on this application will be asked to you by people on these boards. Since that is the case, why don't we go over these questions and see how you might answer them? I'll help you fill this out."

"Great idea," said Jimmy. "I need all the help I can get."

"Question number one. Please tell us about yourself."

Jimmy contorted his face. It seemed that he was stumped already. "Now what in the world do they mean by that?"

"Well," replied Pastor Johnson, "since they next ask

for your secular and then ministerial experience, I imagine that this question is of a general nature. How long have you been saved . . . what is your personality like . . . how consecrated are you?"

"Now, how in the world do you make yourself sound good without coming across as conceited?"

"Just be truthful."

"Okay. I am an outgoing married man with a two-year-old girl. I have been saved for eight years, and my wife has been saved since she was a child. We both have worked in the church here in Sunday school and youth work on a consistent basis."

"That will do, I guess," replied the pastor. "The next question asks you to describe your secular experiences."

"What does that mean?"

"I think they are looking to see if you exhibit leadership and consistency in areas outside of church work."

"I manage the night crew at the grocery store, and I have several men who work under me. . . . I've taken some classes at the junior college . . . and I run in the marathon that the city sponsors."

"Probably skip the last description. Just not necessary."

"Okay. And they want to know my ministerial experience. What does that mean, Pastor Johnson? Does that mean if I have pastored or evangelized or assisted, that sort of thing? . . . because I haven't really done any of that. Should I put down that I have no experience?"

"No, you have assisted me in the church here, and, though you only preach occasionally, you are working as sort of a youth pastor, even though we don't use that as a title. Just write that you assisted primarily as a youth

minister as well as other ministerial functions."

"Will it hurt that I've only had my local license for less than a year?"

"No, ministry often is not dependent upon having a license. But even though you were working in ministry before you got your license, I think it is a good thing that you went ahead and got your license when you did. Not only will the district accept you more easily, but if you do go to West Chester, you'll be able to tell people that you are a minister without having too many questions."

"But since I only have a local license, I'm not really qualified to pastor, am I? I mean, you can't marry anyone until you have a general license."

"Jimmy, don't let that make you anxious. There will be plenty of time for getting your general license if you move to Pennsylvania. Not having your general license won't prevent you from moving on site and getting started."

Pastor Johnson handed Jimmy the application, and the young man scanned through it. "Okay. But, Pastor Johnson, here it asks me to list the city that I will be going to and my projected date of arrival. First of all, I'm not even sure yet about West Chester. We've never even visited it. So how can I even hope to know the projected date of arrival?"

"Just put, 'Philadelphia metro area, possibly West Chester.' Then write that the projected date of arrival is uncertain."

"Okay, whatever you say. The next question is: 'Explain briefly your call and burden for this area.' All I can do is to tell them how I feel. I'm not sure if that is a call or burden."

Pastor Johnson laughed. "You can't go wrong doing that."

Jimmy continued reading out loud. " 'What methods or ideas do you have for reaching people?' Do they mean . . . like revivals or crusades?"

"What do you think is the most effective?"

"I've had most success with Bible studies and inviting people to special services."

"Prayerfully answer this. Certainly Bible studies are always effective. And perhaps God will direct you in a unique way."

"Now it asks, 'How long do you feel it will take you to build and establish a work?' I don't know . . . twelve months."

"That's the kind of answer that will show them you're a novice and might get discouraged after a little while."

"I see what you mean," said Jimmy. "I'd better put several years. Frankly, I have no idea how long it will take me. Let's see here . . ." he continued. " 'What are the feelings of your spouse concerning this move?' I can answer that better than before. She is certainly excited about home missions and a little bit scared. I guess we're both a little bit scared, if the truth were known."

"Well, on the application, Jimmy, it might be good just to state it in a positive way."

"Okay."

"What are the feelings of your children concerning this move?"

"Ashley hasn't objected yet," said Jimmy smiling.

"Just put 'not applicable' on that one. Now it says, 'What are your plans for supporting your family while starting a work?' "

"I'm not sure yet. I'm studying all the ideas that you gave me, but at this point I really don't know."

"Just say that you are planning to work full time, perhaps in employment similar to what you have now as a manager in the grocery store, and that Jeannie may also work. That doesn't prevent you from doing something else. I think they are just concerned that you have a realistic idea of how you are going to support yourself."

"All right."

"Now it calls for you to sign that you agree with the following statement: 'If approved I pledge to work diligently in the harvest field and with a spirit of unity and cooperation with the home missions team, district officials, and fellow ministering brethren.'"

"Sounds good to me."

"Then you have to sign that you authorize them to do a credit reference check on you."

"Um . . . okay."

"One more thing. You have to sign that you agree to the following: 'It is understood as a home missionary if you leave the district before a period of two years, all moving expenses, rent paid, and all other monies be returned to the district within a period of one year from the date left, unless waived by the district board because of extenuating circumstances. Transfer to the new district will be withheld until proper restitution is made.'"

"What does that mean, Pastor Johnson?"

"Jimmy, when a home missionary moves into a district to start a church, sometimes they help him with certain expenses in order for him to get started more easily. I know this varies from district to district, but if they do help you, they want to make sure that you are

planning to stay for the long run and won't pick up and leave when the first difficulties arise."

"That seems fair. If we moved there to start a church, I'd never leave."

Brother Johnson laughed out loud. "I appreciate your willingness, Jimmy, but remember, God is the One who has the final say in what we're going to do. Never say never."

"Right," said Jimmy as if he had known that all along.

With Pastor Johnson's advice, the application was successfully completed and returned, but several weeks passed and Jimmy didn't hear anything. He searched the mailbox every day, hoping for a positive reply. After some weeks, he began to assume that he was rejected. He didn't know why but suspected that perhaps he had a bad credit reference. A couple of years earlier he hadn't paid a hospital bill because he disputed it with his insurance company. Only after they sent it to the collectors did he pay.

One day he asked Jeannie, "Do you think that I was rejected because of that old hospital bill?"

"That would be an awful stupid reason to keep you from doing the will of God!" Jeannie insisted, with her hands on her hips. "Now you call Brother Peters and find out for sure."

After much coaxing, he finally made the call. "Hello, Brother Peters, this is Jimmy Porter."

"Oh, yes, you are from Pastor Johnson's church. I received your preliminary application several months ago."

"Well, I, uh, I mean I just wondered how everything was going."

"I'm sorry we didn't get back to you any sooner. I

needed to wait until the home missions board met before we could take action on your application. We just met last week and went over several applications at the same time. I was just going to get a letter to you."

"Yes, sir, I see," said Jimmy. "Um, how did it go?"

"Oh—I'm sorry. Of course, you'll be getting a letter on this within a week, but the board went over your application along with the others. After discussing it at some length, no objections were raised by any of the board members. It looks like everything is fine." There was a pause and finally Brother Peters said, "Hello?"

"Oh, I'm sorry . . . I just . . . um, thank you very much, Brother Peters."

"Oh, don't thank me. Thank you for making yourself open to God. Of course this is just preliminary approval, and I outlined in the letter that you will be receiving the next steps you should take."

"Well, I know that it is in the letter, but maybe you could just tell me now."

"Perhaps, the next thing on the agenda would be for you to take a trip to the area. This will help you sort out how you feel about the specific location of your calling. I'm not saying this is mandatory, of course, but it might be helpful."

"I'd love to do that," said Jimmy. "When could I come?"

"It would be all right for you to come and visit the city anytime. Depending on when you come, I could probably meet you there and talk with you some more about your burden."

"That would be great," said Jimmy hurriedly leafing through a calendar in front of him. "We were thinking

about coming in April, probably the second weekend. Would that be okay?"

"That would be fine. I could probably meet you in West Chester on that Saturday. Maybe we could get together for lunch."

"Great! Brother Peters, do you have time for me to ask you a couple of questions about your home missions policy?"

"Sure do. I'd be happy to talk to you."

"I asked Pastor Johnson, but he said that the policies vary from district to district and that the best way to get it straight was to ask directly what your procedure is for entering the district and starting a church. You may have already explained this in the letter you sent, but what I am wondering is this: if, when we go to West Chester, we believe that this is God's will for us, what do we do next?"

"Well, the next thing that you would do is meet the home missions board for approval, and finally you would need to meet with the district board."

"Do you mean I need to come out there three times?"

"Not necessarily. When I moved to Pennsylvania from Texas, I was certain that the city where I now am was God's will for me. As a result, I took care of it all in one trip. Now if your certain that this is God's will . . ."

"Brother Peters, I'm not entirely certain that West Chester is where Jeannie and I want to go. We are certainly open to looking at it, and we believe that God is speaking to us about something in the Philadelphia area."

"Well, in that case, let me make this suggestion. If you feel good about West Chester when you drive out, then you might want to come back in early July. That is

when we have our camp meeting. Then it would be possible to meet the home missions board, the district board, and perhaps even locate a place to rent in West Chester, all in one trip. I realize that it is a long trip, and I can appreciate how expensive it is to travel, especially if you wind up making several trips."

"Thanks, Brother Peters. That sounds really great."

"What else do I need to know?"

"That's it for now. I'll introduce you to the district superintendent and the presbyter when you come for camp meeting. I'm excited about the possibility of your coming to Pennsylvania. You're a soulwinner, and we need more soulwinners here. I'll pray with you that God's will is done for you and your family."

Pastor Johnson heard a familiar knock on his door. "Come on in, Jimmy," he said guessing.

"How did you know it was me?" asked Jimmy.

"You're the only one who knocks like he's about to explode into the room," said Pastor Johnson. "What news or revelation do you have to share with me?"

"Well," said Jimmy, easily sliding into the chair across from the pastor's desk, "we're approved! I mean we've got the preliminary approval. We're going to visit West Chester! Then if we like it, we'll go in July to visit the Pennsylvania camp. There we'll meet the home missions board, meet the district board, and maybe even look for a place in the city to rent. That is, if they approve us to go.

"Brother Peters was very supportive. I'm a little less sure about the district board or the presbyters. Brother Peters said that if they approve us, they'll help us get a place to rent. We might get something as soon as Sep-

tember. That would be great because fall is a great time to start church and . . . Jimmy realized that he was talking faster and faster and broke into a nervous laugh. "So . . . do you have any advice for me?"

Pastor Johnson smiled and leaned back in his chair. "I do, but I don't think you'll like it."

"Oh . . . well, that's okay," said Jimmy more slowly. "I probably really need it then." And then he waited for several seconds as Pastor Johnson seemed to be collecting his thoughts.

"Jimmy, you haven't even visited the city, and you're already half moved there. I can see that you have your mind set on going, and I'm happy for you, and I really hope that everything works out. I'm not suggesting that God hasn't called you there, but part of the excitement you're experiencing is the newness and adventure of trying your wings. I'm happy for that, and I'm certainly not trying to throw any cold water on what you're experiencing. I have no doubt that given the opportunity to start a church and favorable circumstances you would do well. But, first of all, you need to visit the city and see how you feel about it. And then, even if you feel certain that this is the place of your calling, there are many more hurdles to overcome before it is certain that you can go there. Jimmy, you're dealing with a very human element. There are a hundred things that could go wrong. What would happen if you went before the district board and they denied your request because someone else was thinking about starting a church there? What if a pastor in a neighboring church has a family who lives in West Chester, and he thinks you'll be moving in on his territory? Maybe someone will see you as a threat in some other

way. Maybe, Jimmy, there is someone who doesn't like me or is jealous that we have a growing church, and because of that they'll be suspicious of you. Maybe they'll think that you're too young and inexperienced. . . ."

"But Pastor Johnson, if it is God's will, He wouldn't let any of those things happen, would he?"

Pastor Johnson pursed his lips. "It's a funny thing, Jimmy. God really takes a chance on trusting people with the distribution of the gospel. Men in authority want to do the will of God, but I can't honestly say that every human decision is the perfect will of God. But if a door closes in your face, don't beat it down trying to get in. It may be that God can use a detour for His glory. There is certainly no way you can start a church in West Chester if people in authority are against it. You need them in favor of what you're doing. Even then, it's going to be tough.

"There are enough places in Pennsylvania without a church that there is bound to be another option, and even if things don't work out for you in Pennsylvania, there will be some place where you will be able to fulfill God's calling."

As the blood slowly drained from Jimmy's face, Pastor Johnson leaned back in his chair and aimed his second volley of advice. "Let me tell you a story, Jimmy. In the Book of Genesis, when Isaac returned from the land of Egypt to Palestine, he looked for water for his flocks and herds. He was familiar with the area and soon found the old wells that his father had dug. He was only a boy when his father's servants had dug them. Unfortunately, the wells were unusable because they were full of debris, for they had been deliberately plugged up by the

Philistines. And so, because it was absolutely necessary to have water for his sheep and livestock, he had his servants redig the wells. As they dug their spades down deeply into the earth, they suffered under the hot desert sun. Shovelful after shovelful had to be hoisted to the surface until finally, many feet below ground, they hit pure water. Soon the wells that had originally been dug by his father Abraham were now alive with water. There were cheers of victory from the herdsmen of Isaac, and the ensuing excitement caused the area herdsmen to see what was happening. When they saw the newcomer in the area had hit water, they argued with Isaac's herdsmen saying, 'That's our water! Stay away from the well! It belongs to us!'

"Isaac could have easily overpowered them and claimed his water rights, but he didn't. 'Fine,' he said. He named the well Esek, which means Contention. He instructed his servants to dig another well. Again they labored under the hot sun and finally were able to strike water for their flocks. But again, the local herdsmen fought with him over that well. Isaac didn't press his claim. He called the well Sitnah, which means Hatred, and then moved to another place. His servants dug a third well. But this time, no one fought them for the well. In celebration, they named the well Rehoboth, which means There Is Room.

"Now Jimmy, it seems a very funny thing that people could argue and fuss about winning lost souls. I mean, over half the world has really not been presented with any sort of saving message of Jesus Christ. It seems so silly that people would actually play politics and jostle for position over the matter, but I'm sorry to say Jimmy, on

occasion, this very thing does happen. And unfortunately, no one can guarantee you that this sort of thing won't happen to you sometime in your ministry. And if it would turn out that people were against you starting a church someplace, the best thing for you to do may be to find a more peaceful place.

"I don't say these things because God has spoken to me about West Chester. I only say them because I want you to have a realistic perspective of what things can really be like even though you are wanting to do a work for the Lord. Not every place really wants you, but I promise you that God has a place where he has made room for you.

"Now besides contending with what other people think, you have to try to measure your own feelings. Even if everyone wants you, you have to assess how you feel about going to a particular place. If you feel that it is not God's will, that makes it easy. Don't go. But you may have other feelings, feelings that are more difficult to identify. You may have things happen that seem to confirm that it is God's will. If you and Jeannie both feel this, you can take it as a green light. Just keep moving ahead with your plans. But if you feel confused, then take this as a caution light. It doesn't mean that it is not God's will, only that you should take a serious look at all the circumstances. Be cautious. Don't rush it. I know that you talked about possibly meeting the board at camp, but that is a self-imposed deadline; if you don't feel like you'll be ready, then don't worry about it. That is an artificial deadline. Most boards meet several times a year.

"And Jimmy, when you go to Pennsylvania, just keep quiet about the purpose of your trip. The more people who

know why you are going, the more pressure this is going to put on you. There'll be plenty of time for announcements later."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy nodding.

"And another thing. Don't let your mind run ahead of you. Live your problems one day at a time. Just live one day after another, and God will help you with the choices that you need to make as they arise."

"Yes, sir," said a more subdued Jimmy, and soon he was driving home with plans to tell Jeannie not to be so excited. For sure, she had better not tell her sister about this and . . .

Bibliography

For general policies of the of the Home Missions Division applicable in every district, see the current Manual of the United Pentecostal Church International.

Yonts, J. E., editor, *Pioneer Evangelism: A Handbook for Home Missionaries.* Hazelwood, MO: General Home Missions Division, UPCI, 1990.

Assignments

1. Call the district home missions director to see what preliminary steps he would recommend to someone who wants to come into the district. (Other districts can be chosen based on cities previously selected as target areas to research.)

2. Suppose you wanted to go to a city that was unchurched, but a pastor some distance away persuaded the district not to give approval. He felt that there might be

a potential conflict because a family from his church lives in the area. He didn't see the need of having another church so close to his, and the district complied with his request.

Write a letter to a friend named Bill and tell him about the situation. Be honest with your feelings while still maintaining a Christian spirit. Tell him what your plans are now. Will you go to another unchurched city that the home missions director has shown you, or will you just wait? Are the district officials missing God's will or is the local pastor? Whose side is God on? Are there any scriptural principles that can help you to cope with the situation. Be prepared to read your letters in class.

3. (Alternate) Explore the healing process that must take place when a minister is hurt by an action of someone close to him. The following resources are helpful:

Richards, Larry. *When People You Trust Let You Down.* Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987.

Swindoll, Chuck. *Recovery, When Healing Takes Time.* Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985.

Chapter 8

Visiting the City

"I'm sure the car will be safe"

"I've got to go now, Sissy. Jimmy's just putting the last suitcase in the car. . . . I told him I'd only be a minute. Now make sure to pick up our mail and paper every day. And don't forget to water the plants on Wednesday. No, we're not taking Ashley. Mom's keeping her for the week. . . . No, we're going to drive it in two days. We'll stay in a motel tonight. . . . Yeah, I hear what you're saying, but I'm sure the car will be safe. Jimmy put two new tires on the front, and he seems to think it will be just fine. . . . I know it's an older car, Sissy, but we'll be just fine. Now remember, you promised not to say anything to anyone about why we are going out East, and I expect you to keep your promise. Do you hear me, young lady? . . . All right. And I mean it. . . . Love ya . . . gotta go . . . I hear Jimmy calling."

They headed east into the face of the rising sun. In the morning it was in their eyes, but as they traveled

across Missouri, it rose overhead. It began to appear in the back window after they crossed the flat fields of southern Illinois. Endless corn and beans flanked the highway, knee-high in the black soil. Indiana was no different until they reached Indianapolis, and soon afterwards they stopped for a late supper. As they left the restaurant, the red orb was starting to go down on the horizon, but Jimmy was determined to go further before they stopped.

It was late when they stopped. They finally decided to stop at a motel just outside of Columbus, Ohio, because Jeannie insisted she had to find out how Ashley was doing. Jimmy carried the suitcases into the second-story room while Jeannie talked on the phone. "Going just fine, Mom. Yeah, safe and sound . . . sure . . . yes, Mom. We'll be careful. . . . Is Ashley still up? . . . Okay . . . I'll wait. . . . Hi, honey . . . want to talk to Daddy? He just came in with the suitcase. . . ."

After Jimmy hung up, he placed another call to the office. "Wake-up call for 6:00 a.m.," he said into the phone.

"For 6:00 a.m.?" asked Jeannie. "I was sort of hoping this might be kind of like a vacation. We won't take another one for a while."

"How about 6:30?"

"Jimmy, we lost an hour as it is."

In the end the wake-up call came at 7:00, and they were on the road by 7:45. The sun was rising in the sky in front of them, and in spite of the early hour, they were both eager to get into Pennsylvania, for neither of them had been there before. Jeannie studied the map for a while and then asked, "I wonder what the Allegheny Mountains

look like? It looks like we cross over them."

"I heard they're not nearly so big as the Rockies," said Jimmy.

Jeannie counted down the miles until the reached Pennsylvania. As they neared the Pennsylvania border, Jeannie said dreamily, "I wonder what adven tures will await us when we get to Pennsylvania?"

"I don't know, but I don't think I like this first adventure," said Jimmy looking at a toll booth. Jeannie decided to snap a picture of the "Welcome to Pennsylvania" sign rather than the sign that proclaimed, "Welcome to the Pennsylvania Turnpike."

"This road is awful bumpy, especially when you consider that we're paying extra for it," complained Jimmy.

"Oh, hush," said Jeannie good-naturedly.

They traveled higher and higher in the foothills until Jeannie could see deep, wooded valleys below. "Look, Jimmy, it's beautiful." Then abruptly they came to a sign that said, "Remove you sunglasses and turn your lights on."

"What in the world?" said Jimmy.

"Look," cried Jeannie joyously, "we're going through the mountain. It's a big long tunnel—right ahead." Jimmy removed his sunglasses just as they entered some sort of tunnel. "Jimmy, we're not going over the Allegheny Mountains—we're going through them."

"I'm surprised they don't charge extra for the tunnel," said Jimmy, not as impressed as Jeannie.

They stopped for lunch in Breezewood, Pennsylvania, and ate at an old-fashioned restaurant.

"Two coffees, please," ordered Jimmy. "I'll take mine with cream."

The waitress returned, plopped down their cups, and rested a silver cream pitcher between them. "I'll be back to take your orders in just a minute," she said, and she shuffled toward the kitchen, leaving them with their menus.

Jimmy placed his hand on Jeannie's and unexpectedly began to weep. "Jeannie, I can't believe this is finally happening. I just know that God is working everything out for us."

But now Jeannie was the one to hesitate. "Be careful, Jimmy. Remember to go slow, like Pastor Johnson said."

"I figure we'll get into West Chester some time around 6:00 p.m. or so, and then we'll find a motel to stay in."

"You didn't guarantee our room?"

"No. I wasn't sure what time we would get in."

"We won't get stuck in Philadelphia traffic, will we?"

"No, we don't even go through Philadelphia."

"Are you sure? You won't get lost or anything, I mean, er . . ."

"Jeannie, you can trust me. We won't go anywhere near the city."

Service in the restaurant was slow, and they had spent almost an hour before they had eaten. "They were slow, but it sure was good food," said Jimmy, patting his stomach as he walked back to the car. Jimmy and Jeannie got in, and Jimmy turned the key expecting it to start without hesitation. Instead the starter groaned as the battery struggled to start the car. Finally it turned over. "Great!" said Jimmy. "That's all I need. I don't think this battery is holding a charge."

"Is the battery going bad?"

"I don't know. It could be anything in the electrical system. I'll have to get it checked out when we get to West Chester."

"It will make it the rest of the way there, won't it?" asked Jeannie.

"Sure, sure," said Jimmy, not sounding very sure.

They got back on the turnpike, and Jimmy started complaining about the bad road again. Somehow, the idea that he had to pay money to drive on roads seemed ludicrous to him, or perhaps he was just nervous about the car and needed something safe to complain about. They left the Pennsylvania Turnpike a little later in order to get gas. Jimmy handed the attendant in the toll booth several dollars; the attendant whacked fifty cents change in Jimmy's hand and said very loudly, "Thanks, my friend." Only he didn't say it like he was speaking to a friend.

"Why do people from out here talk so loudly?" asked Jeannie as they pulled away.

"The closer we get to Philadelphia, the louder they get, it seems. Maybe everyone on the East Coast is hostile." They got their gas, and as Jimmy suspected, the gas station in the town was cheaper than gas on the turnpike. After they got back on the turnpike, Jimmy seemed more relaxed. Neither spoke for a while, but suddenly Jimmy seemed troubled. "Let me see that map," he said in a worried tone. "Oh, no!" said Jimmy. Perhaps it was his nervousness over the battery that contributed to it, but he had completely missed their exit.

"Where are we?" said Jeannie, immediately recognizing the symptoms of a lost driver.

Jimmy crinkled the map and turned it over several

times. "Uh, I think that we're in Philadelphia, some place on the west side. Hey, honey, there is a gas station over there. Maybe I should have him take a look at the battery before we go any further."

"All right, that would be fine," said Jeannie trying to keep optimistic.

They pulled into the gas station, and Jimmy got out of the car. Jeannie could hear him talking to a rather stout gentlemen who was dressed in striped, greasy coveralls. "So you want I should run a test on it or sumthing?" asked the man after hearing Jimmy's explanation of the problem.

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy, and the man looked at him strangely.

Jeannie got out of the car and watched as Jimmy pulled it in a stall. The attendant connected various wires to the battery, fiddled around a little bit more with some gauges, and then announced, "Yep, that's your problem. It needs a battery. That'll be ten bucks for the electrical test," said the greasy mechanic. "You want I should stick a battery in there or sumthing?"

"I appreciate your help," said Jimmy a little suspiciously. "Is there a major chain store around here like a Sears where I could get a battery?"

"Yeah, the closest one is further into Philly. You go five miles down on City Line and hang you a left when you come to 76th and then another right in two blocks. You can't miss it. But there is one thing. Your battery is pretty weak. I may have to jump-start you to get you going. That would be another ten bucks. You sure you wouldn't want me to put a new battery in there or sumthing?"

At that point, Jimmy was more sure than ever that he didn't want this mechanic to put a new battery in his car. Fortunately, the engine turned over, and they were on their way looking for the Sears. It was twenty minutes later, and they were still looking for the store. Jimmy was growing more and more impatient. "Whatever you do, don't turn the engine off," said Jeannie.

"Yeah, yeah," said Jimmy, who had just asked his third person where the Sears store was. One person had given him the wrong advice, one person didn't speak English, and now they finally turned down the street where the Sears store was supposed to be. Jimmy didn't see it immediately, so he pulled into a parking place that was protected by a meter and faced a row of shops that looked forty or fifty years old. There was a man in front of a barber shop sweeping the sidewalk, and Jimmy concluded that at least it looked like a safe neighborhood. He decided to ask the barber where the Sears was, and absent-mindedly he turned off the ignition.

"Jimmy!" shouted Jeannie, "you turned it off."

Jimmy immediately tried starting it but heard only a woeful click from the solenoid indicating there wasn't enough power to turn it over. Jimmy blew out a long breath and popped the hood on the engine. He opened his door, walked over to the front of his car, and lifted the hood to full height. He looked inside and stared hateful looks at his battery, but he couldn't think of what to do next. He didn't want to know what it would cost to tow a car in Philadelphia.

The man who had been sweeping the sidewalk quietly walked over and silently stood next to him. He looked into the engine, too, silently. Like two mourners at a

funeral, they stared down at the silent motor knowing that all was finished. Finally, the spell was broken by the man with the broom. "Whatsa matta?" he said loudly. "You got caa problems?"

"Could you tell me where Sears is? I need to get a new battery."

"Yah, the Sears. That's two blocks down, long blocks, and one block over. But it's just a little place. They ain't got no batteries." He said all this very loudly while waving his hand and moving the broom.

"Thanks," said Jimmy on what turned out to be the low point of his trip.

"But, say, you need a battery. You come with me." And with that he turned and walked into the barber shop.

Jimmy left Jeannie sitting in the car and followed the barber. He had no choice. He kept waiting for the barber to say, "Have I got a deal for you." He also wondered whether the Mafia was active in Philadelphia.

The man stepped behind a counter and opened a little black book. "Yah, Bob, this is Nick. Yah, I got a customer of mine here. I want you should help him. Okay? Yah, sure. He needs a battery. Yah, sure. Now—he needs it. I'll let you talk to him."

The barber was having a rather loud conversation in the phone. As Jimmy considered his own Midwestern mannerisms, they seemed out of place here, so he imitated the barber's mannerisms and volume. "Yeah, a battery," he said loudly. "How much does it cost?" The man on the other end of the phone asked some questions and Jimmy answered them the best he could. "Yeah," he said. "Side terminals . . . well a sixty-month guarantee would be all right, I guess, depending on the price." The man quoted

him a very low price and Jimmy smiled. "Okay," he said loudly, and handed the phone back to the barber.

"So how soon can you get over here with this battery?" asked the barber. "Too long. I need it right now. And bring tools to install it."

Within five minutes an old station wagon drove up to the barber shop and a young man ran over to the car with several wrenches and disconnected the old battery. He quickly replaced it with a new name-brand battery and put the old one in the back of his wagon. Jimmy reached for his wallet, but the young man said, "Hey, just follow me back to the station. You can settle up with my boss there."

Jimmy waved good-bye to the barber as he left and sped to catch up with the station wagon in front of him. Jeannie shook her head in disbelief. "I can't believe this is happening," she said.

"I can't either," replied Jimmy, "but I'm not going to complain."

Jimmy settled up with the garage mechanic and was soon on his way back to West Chester. He found his way back to the turnpike and stayed on it until they got to the turnoff in King of Prussia. "Look at the size of that mall," said Jeannie laughing. "Now I know this is the will of God. How far are we from West Chester?"

"Oh, about thirty minutes, I guess."

The sun set abruptly and Jimmy pulled the knob on the dash. Light flood ed the road in front of them. They were traveling south now and the highway on either side of them was largely barren of lights. Jimmy and Jeannie were silent, lost in their own thoughts. Jeannie spoke abruptly. "A sign, Jimmy—West Chester, ten miles."

"I see it! I see it!" Silence again. They drove through rolling hills, first up and then down, but it seemed mostly downhill. Jeannie leaned forward in her seat, longing for the first look of the city. Signs were up ahead now, and off to the left rolling hills dotted with lights. Their headlights illuminated the sign that signaled the exit for West Chester; for Jeannie, at least, it seemed to lighten up just for her.

"We're here, we're here!" she shouted out loud. "I think we're home."

She turned to Jimmy who was looking over at the lights on the hill as he mumbled something.

"What did you say," asked Jeannie.

Tears were running down Jimmy's cheeks. "That verse of Scripture just came to me, Jeannie: 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.'" Jeannie cried, too.

Fortunately they had no trouble finding a vacancy in a motel. Jimmy carried the suitcases into the room while Jeannie immediately began organizing the room. Jimmy sat on the bed and watched her buzz around the room, but soon he announced, "Let's go find someplace to eat. I haven't had anything to eat since we ate lunch at Breezewood."

"What are you talking about? You ate half a bag of licorice when you started getting nervous about the battery."

They drove the car into the downtown area and stopped in the business area. After walking half a block, they found a restaurant that looked as if it had been there for quite a while. Jeannie insisted that the restaurant had atmosphere. "Looks like a greasy spoon to me," said Jimmy.

"Well, if you're not hungry . . ." They went inside. The cook looked Greek, and Jeannie assured Jimmy that this meant they would get good food.

"Since when have you become such a connoisseur of fine restaurants?" asked Jimmy. She laughed and a young man walked over to wait on their table. Jimmy guessed that he might be from India or somewhere like that. As the young man set the water glasses down, Jimmy asked him, "Are you a student at the university?"

"Yes, I am doing work on a degree in engineering," said the young man smiling broadly. "May I take your order?"

"One of everything on the menu," said Jimmy. "I'm starved."

The young man laughed, and after several more comments by Jimmy he was able to get their order. By the time the meal was over they had engaged in conversation several times. Finally, when the young man brought the check, Jimmy offered, "I'm Jimmy; this is my wife, Jeannie." He opened his wallet, flashed a picture, and said, "And this is my little girl, Ashley."

"She is a very pretty little girl. How old is she?" asked the young man.

"She's three," chimed in a proud mother. "And what did you say that your name was?"

"My name is Karmelesh. I'm very pleased to meet you."

"My wife and I may be moving to this town, Karmelesh," said Jimmy.

"Oh, that's very nice. Will you be going to the university?"

"Probably not. I might take a class or two there

sometime, but the real reason that we would be coming to West Chester is to start a church."

"Oh, I see. That is very nice."

"Tell me, Karmelesh. What do you know about Jesus Christ?"

"Not very much, I'm afraid. He was a good man who was crucified. Christians say He was the Son of God."

"You know a lot more than most people," said Jimmy smiling. "Would you like to learn more about Him?"

"I'm not sure what you mean."

"Well, if we move to this city, I would like to teach you a Bible study; and you'd be able to find out more about Jesus Christ."

"Hmm," said Karmelesh thoughtfully, "I think I would like that."

"It would be a while before we move here. What year are you in college?"

"I am a sophomore."

"Well, then, Karmelesh, perhaps there will be time. I want to write down where you are living, so I can visit you the next time I am in town."

That night in the motel Jimmy sat scribbling over a notebook. He wrote, "West Chester, like many towns in Pennsylvania, is situated on a hill. More properly, it is in the Brandywine Valley."

"What are you doing?" asked Jeannie.

"Keeping a journal."

"Of what?"

"Of everything that happens. Pastor Johnson told me to. He said it would be a reminder of all that has happened to lead us through the doors that God has opened for us."

"Sounds good," said Jeannie, lost in her own thoughts.

"Don't forget to write about the battery and Karmelesh."

"I won't."

"What is going on tomorrow?"

"Well, after breakfast we'll look around town. Then I'd like to visit a couple of real estate places to get a better handle on the housing situation. Brother Peters is coming down to meet us for supper tomorrow night. He'll meet us at the motel at 6:00 p.m."

"Can we go over to the university?" asked Jeannie.

"Your wish is my command," said Jimmy scribbling madly in his journal.

"And what can I help you with?" asked the lady at the desk.

"Well, we're considering moving to West Chester, and we would like to get a general idea of the costs of real estate in the area."

"Tremendous," said the lady, "my name is Barb. What brings you to West Chester?"

"Well, we're not here yet," replied Jimmy, "but we're looking to come to West Chester to start a church."

The lady smiled. "That's good, but doesn't West Chester already have enough churches?"

Jimmy searched for words and prayed a silent prayer for wisdom. "We're not saying anything negative about any of the churches here. We can only say that Jeannie and I feel the Lord leading us here to start a church, and so there must be a job for us to do here. The Lord is very real to us, and that makes each day an exciting day, and that kind of relationship is the thing that we want to share."

"That sounds like the kind of church I'd like to go to. When you get it started, let me know. I'll be sure to

come. Now, what can I show you? . . ."

In the early afternoon, they checked out a home that was for rent; it was very nice, but it was also very expensive.

"This would be beautiful," said Jeannie. "But I also know that it is out of our price range."

"God will provide someplace for us," said Jimmy.

"I believe that, too!" said Jeannie.

"Listen to us," said Jimmy. "You'd think it was all set for us to move here."

"It feels like home to me," said Jeannie.

The streets had a feeling of permanence as old, stately houses lined gentle inclines. The whole city seemed as if it sat on a hill, and church steeples stuck heavenward here and there. As they crossed a street, a disheveled middle-aged couple passed in front of them; they clutched a bottle in a paper sack. There was an irony in the sight, for it seemed so out of keeping with the orderly little city.

"West Chester needs Jesus Christ," said Jeannie.

"Yeah," said Jimmy with a tear in his eye, "and I want to bring Him to them."

They met Brother Peters at the restaurant at 6:00 o'clock that evening. He chatted easily most of the meal, and this set Jimmy at ease. He didn't feel that he had to impress the man.

"So the church is doing well back in Kansas?" said Brother Peters.

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy, "and Brother Johnson sends his greetings."

"And you tell him I look forward to seeing him at conference."

"Now tell me, Brother Porter, what do you think of West Chester?"

"We love it," said Jeannie jumping in and then turning red when she realized what she blurted out. But Jimmy didn't seem to mind and confirmed that they did love what they had seen of West Chester.

"Well, give it some prayer, talk to Brother Johnson, and give me a call as soon as possible. Remember, the home missions board could meet you as early as the camp meeting in July. I'd be thrilled if you would make Pennsylvania your home."

"Thank you, Brother Peters, and thank you so much for your kindness."

Assignments

1. Write a paper on what a person should look for when he visits a city with the possible intent of starting a church. Is it largely a feeling that decides God's will? What would be disqualifiers? What questions would he ask and to whom would he ask them?
2. Write on either of the following subjects:

    a. If you were going to visit a city where would you visit and why? What things would have a tendency to confirm your calling? What things would have a tendency to cause you to question whether it was God's will to pioneer a church in that city? Would Satan be able to hinder you in some way, and how could you discern what was taking place?
    b. Write about a time when God used a personal experience that confirmed His will in your life.

Chapter 9

Meeting the Board

"Even if we say no?"

"And so, Pastor Johnson, we really feel good about it," said Jimmy.

"What do you think, Jeannie?"

"Well, we didn't see any visions in the sky or anything, but it seemed to feel right."

"You're sure that you're not supposed to be going to Philadelphia?" said Pastor Johnson, apparently testing Jimmy.

Jimmy coughed and then said, "We're content to go to West Chester for right now—that is, if the Pennsylvania District will let us."

Pastor Johnson smiled. He leaned back in his desk chair for a few moments and thought of all that Jimmy and Jeannie had told him. "Well, then, since we've been meeting on and off for some months now, and since I feel that you've made progress in a whole lot of areas, particularly in the area of finance, I would have no personal

objections for you to go ahead with your plan to meet with the boards from Pennsylvania as early as their camp meeting."

Jimmy smiled while tears overflowed Jeannie's eyes and trickled down her cheeks. It was almost impossible to describe the depth of his joy.

Preparations began almost immediately. Jimmy called Brother Peters to let him know they were coming to the camp meeting, arranged to take time off work, and called the necessary people in the church to cover for him in the youth group. "Say, Sam, I know you helped me before, but I need another favor from you. Can you take two Friday nights for me next month, again?"

"This traveling business is starting to become a habit for you, Jimmy. If you're not careful, Pastor Johnson may wind up turning the whole youth group over to me, buddy."

Sam then laughed good-naturedly but Jimmy only responded, "Um, yeah." Jeannie's parents agreed to take Ashley again while they were gone. When Sister Smith saw how quickly things were going, she started acting nervous, but Brother Smith was very supportive. "We're really happy for you, Jimmy."

"Thank you, sir. I appreciate your confidence, but of course you understand that nothing is certain yet."

Jimmy and Jeannie took the trip in two days and arrived at the Pennsylvania camp meeting on the first night. Although they were late for service, they got inside the tabernacle before the preacher was announced, and slipped into a pew in the back. After a few remarks by the district superintendent, the speaker stepped to the podium.

Jeannie was in a daze with all that was happening. Everyone stood, so she did too, and looked in Jimmy's Bible as the preacher read the text. Everyone sat, so she did too. Soon everyone was affirming the speaker with amens and hand claps, but Jeannie offered only occasional encouragement to the man. It was hard to be spiritual when she was so nervous. After service, Jimmy was to meet the home missions board, and if that was successful, he would meet the district board the next day. The man behind the pulpit roared on with his message and the audience continued in their response, but Jeannie felt as if she were watching the scene from some distant place.

Several times during the message she looked around to see if she could find a familiar face, but there was not one person in the tabernacle that she recognized. For a brief time, loneliness washed over her, but she decided not to verbalize it to Jimmy. Then she caught a glimpse of Jimmy looking around and she guessed that her thoughts were the same as his.

"Good preacher," Jimmy whispered matter-of-factly to Jeannie.

"Yeah," she returned with the same tone. Just then, the preacher must have made a good point, for the congregation rose to their feet and clapped their hands. Jimmy and Jeannie also rose to their feet and clapped their hands along with the rest of the crowd.

This turned out to be the end of the message and the altar call was given. Numbers of people moved toward the front, and some people headed toward the back door so that soon Jimmy and Jeannie stood more or less alone in their section. Several minutes into the altar service, people began filtering out in earnest. Jimmy and Jean-

nie weren't sure where they were supposed to go, so they just waited to see if they could spot Brother Peters. While people were still praying, a lady walking toward the back stopped long enough to tap Jeannie on the arm. She whispered happily, "Oh, I hear that you are going to start a church in West Chester."

"Yes, ma'am," said Jeannie, but Jimmy immediately corrected her.

"Well, actually it hasn't been approved yet, but we're planning to meet the board sometime during the camp meeting, and we'll find out more then." All this was said in a half whisper, for people around them were still praying.

"Oh, you'll have no problem," said the woman as she strolled off.

"Who was that?" asked Jimmy to Jeannie.

"I don't know," said Jeannie. "I thought you knew her."

Brother Peters found them shortly and enthusiastically shook their hands. "Good to see that you made it. We'll be meeting over in that cabin," he said pointing off in the distance. "Can you meet us there in about twenty minutes?"

"Sure," said Jimmy. "Do you want both of us to come?"

"If you don't mind," said Brother Peters.

Jimmy and Jeannie made a quick trip to the concession stand, for they hadn't eaten since earlier that day except for licorice Jimmy had eaten in the car. Jeannie ordered a cheeseburger, but she was so nervous that she only ate a couple of bites.

"Come on in," said the group of men assembled

around a table in the cabin, and Jeannie and Jimmy came through the door. Each of the men rose and shook hands with them, but because she heard five names in succession, Jeannie couldn't remember any them. She just hoped that she wouldn't have to call them by name anytime soon. Then Jeannie and Jimmy were instructed to sit in two empty chairs at the end of the table.

"Tell us about your burden for West Chester," requested Brother Peters.

Jimmy began, and Jeannie thought he did a really good job. She nodded at appropriate times, especially when they described their visit to the city. Brother Peters said a few things along with some of the others, and Jeannie's mind wandered momentarily. All of a sudden, everyone was looking at her, and she guessed that someone must have asked her a question. She turned to Brother Peters and said, "Excuse me, sir?"

"We are wondering if you could tell us how you feel about going to West Chester?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Um, when Jimmy first told me about moving to the Philadelphia area, I'll have to admit I wasn't real excited about it." Several men rustled in their chairs and Jeannie hurriedly continued. "But when we actually started exploring going to West Chester, I was very excited. Jimmy and I have always wanted to do something more for the Lord, and since I was a little girl I had a dream of being a pastor's wife, although I was never sure whether I could really do it or not."

The men looked at Jeannie with sincere interest in what she was saying. A couple of them nodded their heads as she spoke. "A couple of years ago in prayer, the Lord spoke to me and seemed to press me for a deeper com-

mitment. I wasn't sure what it all meant, but when Jimmy first spoke to me about a year ago and told me that God was dealing with him to start a church, it all began to make sense; and once again I said yes to the Lord. I'm not sure that I ever would feel qualified to be a pastor's wife, but if that is what God wants for me, that is what I want also."

"And how do you feel about West Chester?" asked one of the men.

"I'm excited. Jimmy and I both feel that God has something special there for us—" and then catching herself she said, "uh, that is, if it is all right with you if we go."

Several of them smiled, and then they dismissed Jimmy and Jeannie for several minutes. When they called them back in Brother Peters congratulated them on their desire and said that this board would recommend to the district board that they be accepted into the district. Brother Peters prayed for them while all the men laid hands on them. As they were leaving the cabin, Brother Peters stepped out with them. "You're scheduled to meet the district board tomorrow afternoon. Now, they might be a little tougher on you, but don't let that throw you."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

Jimmy sat outside the room and waited for his turn. A young man was sitting on a chair next to the wall and motioned him to sit next to him. "Are you here to see the board?" he asked. Jimmy nodded and the young man introduced himself as Cecil. Cecil, it seemed, was going in for his local license but had not finished all the required reading. He had almost finished it, but not quite, and hadn't done quite the number of services and hoped it

wouldn't make a difference and doubted it would because he had a cousin who hadn't done it either but got his license and it didn't matter for him and what did Jimmy think? All this conversation took place in less than sixty seconds, but before Jimmy could give his opinion on the previous points, Cecil asked, "Are you here to get your license?"

"No, not really."

"Oh, then why are you here?"

"Well," said Jimmy, trying to think of a way not share his personal business, "I'm meeting them on business to do with home missions work."

"Starting a church, huh?" said the young man matter-of-factly.

"Well, nothing is certain yet," said Jimmy.

"Where are you starting your church?" asked Cecil.

"Well, it's not certain yet," said Jimmy. "We're looking at possibly starting a church in the West Chester area."

"West Chester? Huh . . . well, I'll be."

"Well, nothing is approved just yet and . . ."

"Hey, listen. You want my advice? When you go in there, don't just mumble and stumble around. Show them that you're certain of your call and know what you're talking about. When my cousin went in, and they asked him what he wanted to do, he said he was sort of thinking about going to a certain place and they said, 'You mean you're not really sure what you're doing?' and they said they wanted to know if he had really heard the voice of the Lord and . . ."

But before any more jewels of wisdom could be given away, the door opened where the district board was

meeting and a voice said, "Cecil Olson?"

"I'd like to stay and talk some more, but I got to run. Remember, you've got to be certain of what you're doing."

"Thanks," said Jimmy weakly. "I'll remember that."

Perhaps twenty minutes passed while Jimmy tried without success to make himself comfortable on the chair. At least Jeannie didn't have to come and meet this board. They hadn't asked for her to come, and Jeannie was glad. Another ten minutes passed and Jimmy sat feeling very lonely. Right now, he wished Jeannie sat beside him. He longed for her company.

The door opened and Cecil came out sheepishly. "I don't think I got it," he said as he walked by Jimmy. "I'm really sorry," he said, as if somehow it were Jimmy who had been refused by the board.

"Jimmy Porter," came the voice from the board room. "Remember what I told you about being sure of yourself."

"Thanks," said Jimmy walking toward the door. He felt good about himself and his call as he approached the open door. He had met two men from the board that morning, and he assumed he would be in control of the situation.

But as the door closed behind him, an uneasy feeling crept over him as he stared at a group of men with solemn faces. Maybe they had been meeting too long, or maybe they had just been served an inferior pitcher of lemonade, but for whatever reason, their uninterrupted looks at him as he entered the room made him feel as if he had done something amiss. They sat around three tables that formed a horseshoe and encompassed one smaller table

with a lone chair that faced the group. Time seemed to freeze as Jimmy stood straight and surveyed the group.

One man, with half glasses that slid halfway down his rather long nose, looked up at him from behind a pile of papers. Jimmy thought he could recognize his home missionary application in the pile. He wondered if they knew something bad about him. Maybe the credit check turned out bad . . . maybe they thought he was too young. Jimmy stared ahead, trying to figure what expression on his own face would make himself look older. The man with the half glasses betrayed no expression. It crossed Jimmy's mind that the man might have ability as a good poker player but then whispered half audibly, "Forgive me, Jesus," for he knew that right now he really needed the Lord on his side and didn't want anything to interfere with a close relationship.

This all happened in less than five seconds, but it seemed like an eternity. Finally, the man who sat in the middle of the center table coughed and offered, "You may sit right there," indicating the lone seat in view of everyone.

Jimmy judged that this man was the district superintendent, Brother Shepherd, and he nervously settled into the chair. "Now I understand," began Brother Shepherd, "that you have been approved by the home missions board to go to West Chester."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy. Brother Shepherd spoke kindly and Jimmy decided that maybe his initial fears were unfounded. Maybe, after all, since the home missions board approved him it would be fairly easy to pass by the district board.

"These gentlemen have a few questions that they

would like to ask you," continued Brother Shepherd. "Just answer them honestly and to the best of your ability."

Suddenly this struck Jimmy as very much like an inquisition. He could picture a policeman coming in the side door saying, "You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will . . ." Jimmy was on the point of an outburst of nervous laughter.

"I'm sorry, sir, I didn't hear the question."

"How long have you had your local license?"

"Less than two years, but I've been involved in doing ministry for longer than that." Jimmy felt that if Pastor Johnson were there, he would have told him that this was a good answer.

"And what kind of ministry have you *actually* done?" asked another man.

Jimmy didn't like the way he said *actually,* as if Jimmy was making it up or something. He whispered another "Forgive me, Jesus," and then stated, "I work with the young people primarily. We have a youth service, youth activi ties, and I teach youth class on Sunday morning."

"You don't preach then?" another man asked.

"I've preached some," said Jimmy, "mostly at the nursing home ministry. But I've also taught home Bible studies, and there have been a number of people won to the Lord as a result of those efforts."

"That's good," said Brother Shepherd temporarily relieving Jimmy's tension.

"And you want to go to West Chester?"

"Yes, sir, *I am going* to West Chester," said Jimmy with a sureness in spired by the youth who advised him in the hallway.

"Even if we say no?" demanded Brother Shepherd tensely.

"Umm, no, sir, I didn't mean that," replied Jimmy knowing that if he saw that young man in the hall he'd want to punch his lights out. "Forgive me, Jesus," he whispered and then continued, "I only meant that if you give me permission, I am certain that this is my desire."

"Oh, I see," said Brother Shepherd, somewhat placated.

The next fifteen minutes whizzed by with a barrage of questions and attempted answers. They asked about his wife, his finances, his call, his prayer life, and his motives. He answered the best he could but always felt that he was on the defensive.

"And how fast a growth rate do you anticipate having?"

Trick question, he thought. If I say fast, they'll think I'm unrealistic, and if I say slow, they think I have no faith. Finally he spoke. "I plan to plant seed and water it. I figure that how fast it grows is up to God."

"No definite goals, then . . ." said one man sadly as he scribbled on a piece of paper.

Another man quickly asked, "And just exactly how do you plan to plant seed?"

"Well, I'll give home Bible studies, for one thing. In the past they have been successful for me."

"And is that the only method of evangelism that you plan to use?"

"Well, my pastor told me not to have services right away, but we do plan on having them once we get going, and we certainly want to pray about what methods of evangelism God wants us to use." The answer seemed

weak, even to Jimmy. He didn't know it was going to be this hard. Finally they dismissed him and told him to wait outside the door while they talked about him. He did. Throughout the duration of a quarter hour he periodically whispered, "Forgive me, Jesus."

The door opened, and he was invited into the room again. This time the tension was not so noticeable. Brother Shepherd asked Jimmy to be seated and then explained, "I'm sorry if the questioning seemed severe. You understand that if we are going to invest time and money into a home missionary, we want to make sure that he is qualified to do the job. The home missions board has already approved you to go to West Chester, and we agree with their decision. We look forward to having you as a part of the Pennsylvania District."

Jimmy broke into a smile, but perhaps it was premature, for Brother Shepherd continued in a more sober tone. "Of course, we have certain questions about your lack of pastoral experience and the fact that you've never really been in ministry on your own, but we feel that you will be able to succeed. Our recommendation is that when you move to West Chester, you attend a neighboring church once during the week. There are two in the area. There is a church in West Grove and also there is a newer work in Norristown. Either one is a half an hour's driving distance, but that is pretty good in Pennsylvania. Once you've established yourself on location and want to launch out on your own, we would be happy for you to do that."

"Thank you very much," said Jimmy.

"Do you have any questions for us at this point?" one of the men asked. Jimmy had all sorts of questions, but his desire to get out of the board room was so great he

decided that they could wait. "No, sir," he replied. He would see Brother Peters later.

"Hi, Mom, this is Jeannie. . . . Yeah it went great. We could feel your prayers. . . . No, nobody had any objections at all. In fact, Brother Peters suggested that we go down to West Chester and try to find a place to live while we are here. He said that the district would help us get settled. . . . Yeah, it was a surprise to us too! Mom, stop crying. . . . Are those happy or sad tears? . . . Yeah, it would be all right if it was both."

Jimmy and Jeannie left on Saturday for West Chester. It was afternoon before they got there. They bought a paper and called several places that isted apartments for rent. Most of them could not be seen until Sunday or Monday. Sunday morning they drove to church in Norristown. It was a new church and wasn't large, but the pastor, Brother Phillips, really made them feel at home. He asked them to go out to eat, but they had to hurry back to West Chester, for they had a 2:00 p.m. appointment to see a house.

They needed a home they could afford and was suitable for large group Bible studies. That afternoon the place they looked at seemed perfect, but it was also a little expensive. By Tuesday morning they decided that the place wasn't so expensive after all, but when they checked back on it, somebody had already rented it. Finally, late in the afternoon they found a duplex that was both nice and reasonable. The first floor had a family room and a bathroom while on the second floor were the living room, kitchen, and bedrooms. They asked the landlord if they could have Bible studies there, and he consented, but he didn't want a sign, and if there were any complaints, he

reserved the right to change his mind. It wasn't what Jimmy and Jeannie had expected, but then again, they were sure that it would meet their needs for now. They placed a deposit down on it to hold it so that they could move in on September 1. On Wednesday morning they started for home.

Assignment

Pretend you are a member of a district board and must decide who is approved to start a church. Since your particular district invests funds into new churches getting started, you are very careful about whom you approve. A sincere Bible school student writes you a letter. Answer his questions to the best of your ability, and try to base your position on scriptural principles. He writes: "How much money should a person have before he moves to a city to start a church? What would you consider the minimum age at which someone should be approved to start a church? How much education should a founding pastor have, and in what areas? Would you let a single young man start a church? Why or why not? Would you let a single young lady start a church, since it is not uncommon for single ladies to do foreign missions work? Why or why not?

Chapter 10

Moving In

"Does the landlord know?"

When they left the city of West Chester on Wednesday morning, Jimmy and Jeannie felt victorious. They had been through some of the toughest but most exciting days of their lives, and they had passed all the tests—without outside help from anybody. Jeannie waved goodbye to "their" city as they headed north toward the Pennsylvania turnpike. She turned and said, "Well, Pastor Jimmy, it won't be long now!"

For mile after mile on the turnpike, the car just seemed to float along as they drove. But the adrenalin drained from them, and the intense schedule they kept on the trip came back to collect weariness from each of them. No word was spoken in the car through the last half of Pennsylvania and through most of Ohio, for Jeannie was sound asleep. Jimmy needed to go back for work on Thursday night, so they didn't stop for a motel.

"Your turn to drive, Jeannie."

"Oh, Jimmy, I can't! Where are we? What time is it?"

"We're in the middle of Southern Illinois, it's the middle of the night, and it's time for me to get an hour's sleep."

"Oh, all right."

They neither looked nor felt victorious by they time they drove into their hometown. "How was the trip?" asked Sister Smith as she handed Ashley to Jeannie.

"Oh, we'll tell you more about it later," said Jeannie wearily. "Right now, I've got to get Jimmy home so he can sleep a couple of hours before he has to go to work."

Word spread quickly now among the church members that Jimmy and Jeannie would be going out East somewhere to start a church. Jimmy and Jeannie tried neither to confirm nor deny the rumor until they talked to Pastor Johnson and got his advice as to how to handle their announcement. In the end he handled it for them by announcing it in church and requesting prayer for their upcoming move.

They still met on Tuesday nights, and Pastor Johnson continued to counsel them. One night Jimmy just bubbled with excitement. "We just want to thank you for getting us through the rough times."

Pastor Johnson smiled and then handed Jimmy and Jeannie a piece of paper. "Don't thank me too soon. You might have a few rough spots ahead. Now I want you to look closely at this piece of paper. This is a stress predictor developed by professional psychologists. Each major change is assigned a certain stress value, and a person who takes the test is to add the values of points assigned to each stress factor. Do you understand what I am saying?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy obediently. He scanned the paper to see what was applicable. "We are moving. That's got a high number on it for stress."

"Change of family status," said Jeannie. "I am losing my mother as a support person."

Pastor Johnson added, "For Pentecostals, the church is like an extended family."

"That's right, Pastor Johnson," said Jimmy. And then he said rather hesitantly, "Pastor, you've been like a father to me."

Everything grew quiet in the room and each one stared at his sheet. Jeannie broke the spell by continuing the survey.

"There will be a change of jobs and a change of friends," she said.

Jimmy looked back down on the sheet and continued to search for other stress predictors. "Starting a major new project—that causes major stress. Certainly starting a church is a major new project."

"What does all this mean?" asked Jeannie.

"Well, it could mean a lot of things. First of all, it helps if you know ahead of time that you are going to be under a lot of stress. That in itself helps you to cope. But what psychologists actually say is that it is a predictor of illness—that is, if you add the points up and they total over a certain amount, the odds are that you will be sick within the next year."

"But doesn't this leave God out of the picture?" asked Jimmy.

Pastor Johnson laughed. "It sure does! I wasn't showing you this as some sort of doomsday prophet. I believe God can keep you well. But I was just trying to make you

aware of the level of stress you will experience. Tell me, how does stress tend to affect you?"

"I think we argue more," said Jeannie, "or else Jimmy clams up and tends to get real distant."

"Jimmy, if you get distant from Jeannie, how does that make her feel?"

"Well, I imagine it makes her feel lonely."

"What do you think Jeannie does now when she feels lonely?"

"I guess I haven't been real sensitive to that. I would say that she goes and visits her mom."

"Yes," said Pastor Chester. "And what will she do in West Chester?"

Jimmy shrugged. "I guess you're trying to get me to realize that I need to be more available to her. That she won't have her mother, and it may be awhile before she meets other friends that are close."

"Jimmy, there are more pressures for home missionaries than what is on this chart. There is a real tendency to measure your self-worth by how many people are coming on a Sunday morning or whether or not you have a building. People don't mean to be cruel, but they sometimes ask questions that cut rather deep. I remember when Sister Johnson and I first moved to town; we hadn't been here for two weeks when a neighboring pastor called and asked me, 'Well, Brother, how many are you running?' Needless to say, that added to my pressure when I thought I was expected to already be having services. I think home missionaries are a little smarter today than I was. Most of them are able to take their time and start with home Bible studies. Then when they have won some families they start services. It takes away a lot of unnecessary strain.

"When you first get to town, just take your time to get settled. Don't be in a big hurry to start something. Be friendly, meet people, and tell them what you are going to be doing. Then develop a mailing list of people who are interested. Whenever you have a special event, you can send information to the people on that list and invite them to it. I'm not just talking about churchy events either. Have a barbecue or a potluck or celebrate national friendship week. Make up your own special day. Use your imagination.

"The names you collect won't be just a mailing list. Use it as a prayer list as well. Ask God to open the doors as he sees fit. I hate to say it, but some people won't respond no matter how much you chase them. That's tough to figure out, though. Some of the people I thought would be so receptive still haven't come in the church, and people who I predicted would never be hungry for God are now some of my best saints. It's hard to know. We've had people on the mailing list for several years who seldom showed their face, but all of sudden they came into the church."

Jimmy could tell that Pastor Johnson was talking about a favorite subject, because his face was lit up and he was talking very fast. And Jimmy was drinking it in. He wasn't taking notes or anything, but he wouldn't forget what Pastor Johnson was telling him.

The pastor continued, "Don't get in such a hurry that you think you've got to do it all right away. Take time for yourselves and find some minister friends with whom you can talk and let down your guard. That's absolutely vital. When Sister Johnson and I came here, we would drive fifty miles to go to a pastor friend and play table

games. We were starved for fellowship, and believe me, it was worth the drive. I don't want to seem to be carnal, but those nights of fellowship did more for me than a rally or some sort of conference where people wanted to know how I was doing."

Momentarily Jimmy's attention was diverted to thoughts of their upcoming move. Everyone in the church was wishing him well as if he had already started the church. Although it made him feel good, it also created a feeling that he just *had* to produce. Perhaps Pastor Johnson sensed this when he began his study with Jimmy and Jeannie. Perhaps Pastor Johnson just understood typical human behavior.

Jimmy tuned back in to what Pastor Johnson was saying. He had switched subjects. "You know, right before Sister Johnson and I moved to town I really went through a time of personal struggle. I wondered, Who will listen to me? How will I be able to tell people what to do and what not to do? Won't people just ignore me or laugh at me? The worst thing in the world is to think that you are going to make a fool of yourself. Well, when I was praying about it, the Lord spoke to me. It wasn't an audible voice, but it certainly was assurance from Him. He said, 'I will give you authority. You don't have to worry about people listening to you.'

"And do you know something, Jimmy? It worked just that way. The people who got in the church and stayed seemed to want to please me. I had the most peace when I remembered that. I'm not saying that I never had any trouble, but people who won't listen when the Lord whispers to them generally will not listen if I yell at the top of my lungs. If I made any mistakes when I first

started out, it was not that I didn't correct problems, but that I corrected them too soon and with too much authority. It's kind of like killing a fly on your furniture with a sledgehammer. You may get the fly all right, but the cure might be more costly than the problem. I guess most young pastors make the mistake of overcorrecting, and I was very fortunate to have saints who loved me and were patient with me.

"Jimmy, the same One who called you will give you the authority to do the job. Don't be quick to act. Be patient for God to work things out in your church, because God will honor your authority. Be careful how you use it."

Jimmy nodded his head, but he didn't really understand what the pastor was talking about. Perhaps he would understand more once he started pastoring.

Moving day was Monday, and the church had a goodbye gathering after the Sunday night service before they left. They sat at a head table with Pastor and Sister Johnson. Cake and ice cream were served, and a number of cards and gifts were placed on a table. Almost the whole church was there. After everyone was served, Pastor Johnson made a speech. Jeannie looked around at her family with tears in her eyes. "Jimmy and Jeannie are not making a rushed decision, but after much counsel and months of planning, they are moving to a new field, confident that they are in the will of God."

Pastor Johnson is always so good at these things, Jeannie thought. Her mother's ice cream was melting.

"And we never want them to forget that this is their home church, and that the door is always open for them to visit, or if in the future it is God's will to bring them back to us, we will accept that as a gift from God."

Jeannie's sister was crying now. Ashley, who had sat so well in the chair next to her until now, didn't understand all the emotion and called out for "Memom." Sister Smith scooped up her granddaughter and held her for the remainder of the gathering. The goodbyes were bittersweet. Friends whom they had known a long time hugged and kissed them, prayed over them, and wished them the best. People were there who still needed them, too: the Pierce family, whom they had won to the Lord, and Joe, who had received the Holy Ghost only two months ago. Jeannie wondered who would disciple him after Jimmy left . . . and who would take care of the young people . . . and who would help Brother Johnson when his burdens got too heavy. Jimmy could be a bother, but Jeannie knew that he was also a great blessing. She wondered who would love the children in her Junior Sunday school class as she did . . . and if Crystal would stop coming as she threatened to do if "Sister Jeannie moved away" . . . and if her mom would really be all right just seeing her "sweet Ashley" only on holidays.

The words "Maybe we shouldn't go" almost framed on her lips to Jimmy, but then she remembered that Pastor Johnson had told her that she wouldn't be able to trust her emotions at the end. Now she understood.

Moving day wasn't any easier. Friends and family members swarmed like bees to help them pack last-minute items. Little things became precious as they packed them up, and Jimmy and Jeannie got into more than one "discussion" about what was worthwhile to bring. It seemed to Jimmy that half the moving truck was full of Sunday school material, and Jeannie should understand that they weren't even going to have a Sunday school at first. As

Jeannie was packing five coffee cans of miscellaneous nuts and bolts, she asked if all of this was really important since he always wound up going to the hardware store anyway, and he could never find anything in those cans when he needed it anyway. But he was going to organize those someday, and on a number of occasions he had located the exact part that he needed. She knew there was no good reason to bring those barbells, because they had been sitting in the closet since right after Jimmy purchased them. But he intended to use them someday, and still might, and besides they were easy to store. So in the end, they took things that weren't altogether necessary because it was just too difficult to say goodbye to that part of themselves right now. The emotional issues were just too big, and they both sensed that this was not the right time to address these issues, for they were not arguing about the things themselves, but all the feelings associated with those things.

They planned to leave by 10:00 a.m., but it was 2:00 in the afternoon before Jimmy drove the moving truck away from the driveway. Jeannie and Ashley followed in the car. Jeannie turned to get a last look at the crowd of well-wishers waving at them from their front yard. Jimmy honked several times and then turned onto the road. Jeannie's car hesitated at the end of the driveway. She thought of some more things she wanted to say, but Jimmy was already a half a block ahead. In the end, she simply turned from the group, not even risking another wave. She sped up to follow Jimmy.

They had two days to drive, two days to think and wonder what lay ahead and to ruminate on the things they had left behind. Jimmy worried some over finances and

if he could find a job right away. Jeannie worried about Ashley and finding a new doctor who was good with her. She worried about the school system and what they would do when Ashley got old enough to go to kindergarten, and if ministers' wives were stuck up, for she had never seen herself as a genuine minister's wife before, and she was afraid to go to the district meetings for fear that the other minister's wives wouldn't accept her . . . and she really needed a friend right now.

In the truck Jimmy thought about what to call himself. He certainly wasn't a pastor yet, so he couldn't call himself Pastor Jimmy, and he wasn't sure about Brother Jimmy, even though that is what the kids in the youth group called him, at least when adults were around. He settled on just being Jimmy for now. And then the old fears began to haunt him. Who would listen to him? Who would want him for a pastor? He thought he had settled that in prayer after Pastor Johnson talked to him. The Lord would give him authority, and if people listened to him, it was because He had put it in their hearts to do so. All he needed to do was to be himself. Jimmy reassured himself as the miles piled up on the truck.

They stopped to eat often, not just because they were hungry, but they really enjoyed each other's company. Each restaurant was a time to talk some more, to plan, and to anticipate what God would do for them. Despite their anxiety, there was an undergirding excitement that nothing could take away and a sureness that what they were doing was right.

Jimmy insisted that they drive late the first night. He had reservations at a motel in Columbus where they had stayed before.

Jeannie woke up with things on her mind. Instead of saying "Good morning," she said, "You know, the side-by-side is perfect for us right now. People won't have to come upstairs to use the bathroom, and we can keep our living quarters separate. It would make me nervous if I had to have everything in the house just right in order for us to have service. The kitchen is the hardest thing to keep presentable. And at least with the bedroom, you can shut the door if you need to."

"Yeah," said Jimmy hardly listening. "Do you realize that, counting the real estate agent, I already have names of seven different people who are contacts?" He said this as if he were rich.

And then, as they dressed to meet the day, he announced, "I'm going to check into the temporary services for work next Monday."

Although they got up early, they took their time over breakfast. Jeannie asked, "Does the landlord know we're coming?"

"Well, he knows we're coming this week."

"Jimmy!"

"Oh—I'll call them at the next stop," said Jimmy. "I figure that we'll get in about five or six tonight."

Somehow neither Jimmy or Jeannie minded the long ride on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. It gave them one last stretch where they could privately plan and dream. As Kansas grew more distant, West Chester seemed more and more real. It was late afternoon when Jimmy pulled the truck off the turnpike, paying the toll tickets for two vehicles. They headed south in the afternoon sun, with only a half hour separating them from West Chester. "We're almost home," he said to Jeannie in their rear-

view mirror, but she didn't see him.

"That kitchen has a built-in dishwasher!" she told Ashley, who had awakened from a nap. "I can put the dirty dishes out of sight, even if I don't have to wash them right away . . . and those children in the neighborhood could come to an afternoon Bible club even before we start services . . . the blue chair should go by the picture window and . . ."

Somehow Ashley wasn't impressed. "Are we almost home?" she asked. "I'm hungry."

"Yes, Ashley, we're almost home."

Twenty minutes later Jimmy saw the signs for West Chester exits, and he could scarcely contain himself. His dream was about to become a reality. "Of course there were detours and delays," he said to an imaginary new convert who sat in the seat beside him, "and this isn't the city I envisioned at first. But God knows where He wants me." And then Jimmy didn't need to visualize a new convert to know for sure. A deeper insight suddenly came to Him. This was God's doing. God wanted a church in this city, and He wanted Jimmy to pastor it. It was God who had opened these doors for him! It suddenly gripped Jimmy that this was his city, the place where God had sent him. Tears flowed unbidden down his cheeks.

Jeannie needed no such revelation. She already believed that. A moving truck whizzed closer to West Chester at sixty miles per the hour, while inside the cab tears flowed freely down the driver's face. A car followed the truck and inside a little girl asked the driver, "Why are you crying, Mommy?"

"It's all right, Ashley, we're almost home." Indeed,

they were almost home.

The truck pulled off on the second exit and wound around to the side-by-side. Jimmy knocked on the landlord's door. He lived next door, so Jimmy didn't have to travel far to get the key. "Mr. Verity, we made it," he announced.

"Good," returned the man, handing him an envelope with the keys inside. "I'm glad to see you made it. If there is anything I can do to help, just let me know."

"Thanks, Mr. Verity. I think we've got it under control." Jimmy propped the door open and together they began bringing in boxes. It was then that they discovered the boxes weren't marked as well as they should have been, so rather than open them to discover their contents, they carried almost everything to the living room. Jeannie went for pizza after they had been working for an hour or so, and they took a short break when she came back. As most of the boxes disappeared in the house, Jimmy realized that he had forgotten to ask anyone to help them carry in the heavy stuff. The sun was already setting, and Jimmy found himself back at the landlord's door. "Mr. Verity?"

"Yes."

"I know you said that if there was anything you could do to help to let you know . . . and I'm terribly sorry to bother you, but I forgot to get anyone to help me with the appliances and . . ."

"Sure, no problem," said his landlord.

"I've got a dolly to carry things and . . ."

"That will make it a lot easier," said Mr. Verity, laughing.

To the Teacher

Have students discuss their feelings the first time they left home. Fear of the unknown can be almost paralyzing. Have two students role-play the following situation: One of them is a pastor, and another is a young person who has come in for counseling. He (or she) feels a call to start a church in a remote location but is finding it difficult to deal with the fears of the unknown. Have "the pastor" give counsel to help allay the fears of this young person.

Call a local moving company and see if it has any brochures that provide a step-by-step procedure for moving. Go over possible expenses involved in moving.

Assignment

Select a city and estimate the total cost to move there. How much would a preliminary trip cost in order to find a place to rent? Next, figure in one-time costs such as security deposit, hookup costs for telephone, etc. Add the rental cost of a moving truck and the cost of moving any other vehicles.

Each student should select a different city so that comparisons can be made when the material is presented in class.

Chapter 11

Building Relationships

"Ashley can help teach, too"

By the time they emptied the truck, it was well past everyone's bedtime. Jimmy didn't feel like putting together the frame of their double bed, so Jeannie put some sheets on the two mattresses that lay on the floor and scrounged up a couple of blankets from an unmarked box. Ashley was already asleep on a pile of boxes in the living room, so they just tucked her into bed with them.

The night was short. At 6:00 a.m. Ashley wanted cereal, and Jimmy went into the kitchen to find her something. He lay back down while Ashley remained in the kitchen.

"What did you give her to eat? We don't have any cereal," said Jeannie.

"Ummm . . . I don't remember."

Jeannie quickly got up and cleaned up the box of animal crackers that Ashley had spread all over the floor.

Later that morning, Jimmy returned the truck to a

local mover. Jeannie and Ashley followed him in the car, and they picked up some hamburgers and french fries to eat. As they returned to the house, Jeannie went into the living room and pulled a large box from the mountain of boxes that approached the ceiling. She found three chairs to surround it and spread a paper tablecloth over it. She set out each serving with great finesse, placed the napkins evenly and the french fries neatly at the end of the napkin, and then tenderly placed the burgers in their respective places. Finally Jeannie offered to Jimmy, "Monsieur, welcome to the restaurant of Madame Porter, decorated in 'early cardboard.'"

It was three days before Jeannie made sense of the majority of their possessions. Towels made their way from several different boxes into the linen closet, and the kitchen seemed to be assembled one fork at a time. Jimmy was busy, too. Tools were stored in the garage, and although he wanted to store Jeannie's Sunday school material in the garage as well, she vetoed that idea immediately. Sunday school materials were finally packed into numerous boxes and placed in the extra closet.

Laundry piled up, and the whole family took a trip to the laundromat. It seemed that Jimmy forgot to check the hookups when they first looked at the house, and he now realized that their gas dryer wouldn't work in their all-electric house.

For several days they merely survived, trying to organize their belongings and make the necessary adjustments. The phone wasn't hooked up until the second day, and unconsciously each of them waited for it to ring. By that evening they realized that no one would call, so they called home and gave a few people their phone

number. On the third day, at 3:00 p.m., they had their first phone call, and both Jeannie and Jimmy ran when they heard it ring. "Hello," said Jimmy as he wrestled the phone from his wife.

"Brother Porter, this is Brother Andrews, the presbyter for the section, and I called to tell you about the rally that . . ."

"Uh, excuse me, sir, my wife is beating me with a telephone book because I answered the telephone. I'll be back in a minute."

Several moments later he came back on the line. "Sorry, sir, it's just that you are the first person to call in on this line, and we had to decide who was going to answer the phone."

"Quite all right," said Brother Andrews, not sure whether it was quite all right or not. "I just called to welcome you to the district and to let you know that there is a rally at my church Saturday at 2:30."

It didn't take much coaxing for Jimmy and Jeannie to go to the rally. They were ready for some fellowship and looked forward to the chance to make some minister friends in the area. Jimmy arrived a half hour early to the rally. Coming early to a rally was a new experience for him.

True to Pastor Johnson's prediction, several people in the audience asked Jeannie how many they were running, but on the whole it was very nice. Jimmy gave a testimony of how he came to West Chester, and after the service two people gave Jimmy addresses of relatives in the city that he might contact. Jeannie met several ministers' wives, and they all seemed very nice, but it was too early to tell which of them might become a special friend.

They went to church at Norristown the next day, and on Monday Jimmy put in a number of job applications. He was interested in piano tuning, and he had even sent for the course on how to do it, but he thought at first he should have a steady job to support himself until that opened up for him. He put in his name for temporary employment, but since no one called right away, he did more job hunting. It was Tuesday afternoon, the second day of his search, and he had little, if any, success. He wasn't picky. He went anywhere he thought there would be openings, but no one seemed to be hiring—at least not for the kind of job that could support a family. He was about to give up for the day when he drove by a large grocery store that stayed open twenty-four hours. He was tired of filling out applications for nonexistent jobs, so he simply asked for the manager.

"Yes," the man said, poking his face through the glass in the service desk.

On a whim Jimmy said, "Hey, if you're ever looking for a fantastic night manager who works like a beaver and gets along with anybody, I know where you can find him."

"Oh, yeah?" replied the man with a sour look on his face. "Who?"

"You're looking at him," said Jimmy with a forced smile on his face. "I've had six years of experience, and I'm ready to start anytime."

"Hmmph," said the man through the glass, not changing his expression. "Come inside and we'll talk about it.".

The man wasn't as gruff as he had seemed at first, and that is how Jimmy met his new boss. Of course, the man wondered what made him move to West Chester,

and this led him to question whether the church activities might interfere with his responsibilities, but Jimmy assured him that they wouldn't. Three days later Jimmy started working from midnight to 8:00 a.m. The pay wasn't as much as he had hoped for, but the benefits were good, and the job would fit well with his schedule.

From the very beginning, Jimmy and Jeannie collected names and addresses for a future mailing list. When the phone man came to install the phone, he was questioned, and when they found out he was local and didn't have a home church, Jimmy asked if he would mind being on their mailing list. He didn't mind, and so his name was added. Jimmy's boss was on the list along with several of his co-workers. Jimmy played a "faith game" in his mind and tried to visualize who would be his youth leader and who would be his Sunday school teachers. He thought his boss might work well overseeing his bus ministry once he got saved and got a little sweeter. The list of people that Jimmy and Jeannie kept became their "prayer and prospect" list. In his daily prayer time Jimmy would call the names out to God and ask God to open the doors.

It was easy to get names. People naturally asked them why they moved to West Chester, and they told them that they had come to start a church. "Let me know when you start having activities" was often the reply, and Jeannie and Jimmy would immediately collect the phone number and address of the person who made such a request. In this way the Welcome Wagon lady made it on the list, as well as the lady who checked out Jeannie at the drugstore. By the end of the first month they had thirty-seven such names. "It is kind of like prospecting for gold," Jimmy told Pastor Johnson on the phone one evening.

"Even though I know that some of the people on the list will never visit, I know that some of them will. And some of them will get saved, too!"

After several weeks in town, they visited the real estate lady whom they had met when they first came to town. "Hi, Barb, I just thought I'd stop by and see how you were doing."

"Oh, you made it to town!" she said happily.

"Yep. We're getting settled in," said Jimmy.

"You're renting then?" she said.

"For now, but we know a good real estate agent when we get ready to buy."

Barb smiled. She had a professional air about her. She was in her late thirties, wore lots of makeup and nice clothes, and always carried herself in a very businesslike fashion, trying to project an image of success.

But Jimmy knew that Barb was a very lonely person. She was a single mother trying to raise two children on the commissions of a real estate agent. And in the fluctuating market, that just wasn't easy. "We're ready to teach you that—" he started to say "home Bible study," but suddenly remembered her two girls she was raising by herself. "We're ready to teach you that family Bible study. Jeannie can teach the girls the same lesson that you and I will be studying. It's kind of like a walk through the Bible."

"Oh, that would be great!" she said with enthusiasm. "I didn't know it was for the girls too!"

Apparently, neither did Jeannie. She cast a surprised look at Jimmy, as soon as they were out the door of the real estate company. He quickly explained, "Look, with all your Sunday school material, it shouldn't be a problem

at all. Just teach something that corresponds to what I'm teaching in the *Exploring God's Word."*

"But what am I supposed to do with Ashley?"

"Bring her along. Ashley can help teach, too!"

As it turned out, it worked better than Jeannie could have anticipated. While Jimmy taught Barb in the kitchen, Jeannie taught the children a story in the living room. Denise, Barb's oldest girl, was eleven; and the younger girl, Chantel, was five. Even though it was a challenge to work with the age difference, Jeannie managed by keeping the story moving. Then while Chantel worked on coloring, Denise worked on learning the books of the Bible. When Jimmy finished, the children came over from the living room to the kitchen and presented their story to the adults using puppets or pictures.

At first, it seemed that Barb was struggling through the lessons. Perhaps she was just working hard to retain her professionalism. Although she was polite, she didn't seem to be receiving the message that Jimmy presented. However, she looked forward to each week, apparently more for her children than herself. She loved the fact that her children were getting religious education.

On the fifth week, she seemed less distracted by the children in the other room. She asked, "How could God keep loving Israel when they turned their back on Him so much?"

Jimmy decided to press for a commitment while she seemed open to the Lord. He said, "That's a good question, but if the truth were known, there is no one worthy of God's love. Let's look at an important verse about this in the New Testament." He turned to it and had her read it. "Now, Barb, what does Romans 3:23 say?"

She read, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

"That's right. And sin is thinking wrong thoughts, doing wrong things, and saying wrong things. According to this verse everyone has done wrong. Israel did wrong things. We've studied about that. But I can think of some things that I've done wrong. I'm sure you can, too."

"Yes. I sure can."

"All right. Let's read this next verse of Scripture. It's found in Romans 6:23. Do you want to read it?"

"Sure. 'For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

"Good. Now the Scripture speaks here of wages. Wages—that is what you earn for working. Barb, if they didn't pay me for working at the grocery store, or they didn't pay you when you sold a house, you wouldn't want to work, would you?"

Barb was sincerely listening. She shook her head no and Jimmy continued. "Wages are what you earn for working. Now, it says here, 'The wages of sin is death.' Death is eternal separation from God in hell."

Barb blinked when he said that. He continued, "That's what Israel deserved. More importantly, that is what we deserve—that is what we earn for our sin—death. But look here—the rest of the verse says, 'The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ out Lord.'"

"Now, read how Jesus died for us in Romans 5:8-9." Then he took her to I Corinthians 15:1-4 to show her the gospel message, and finally to Acts 2:38 to show her the proper response to the gospel.

"Now, if you will pray right now and repent of your sins, asking Jesus to forgive you, He will change your

life." Then Jimmy asked, "Do you want to pray with me?"

He had prayed before with her, and so this wasn't such a big of change from other times, but now he was asking for some sort of commitment. She didn't say yes, but she sort of nodded. So he prayed for her. "Dear Jesus, Barb has admitted that she is a sinner. She has thought wrong thoughts, she has said wrong things, she has done wrong things. She knows that the wages of sin is death. But now, Lord, she wants to change her life and to live for You. She is asking You to forgive her of all her sins. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Barb never moved her mouth to pray, but Jimmy knew from leading other people to repentance that you don't always see what is going on inside. She did seem moved by that simple prayer. "Did you confess your sins to Jesus and ask Jesus to forgive you?" he asked, for he knew that it was important to affirm what was happening.

"Yes," she said forcefully as if she was holding back tears.

"Do you think He has heard and accepted your prayer?"

"Um, I guess so."

"Barb, you have made a great start. Believe that Jesus hears you when you pray. Expect the presence of God to be operating in your life. Because of this commitment you've made to the Lord, you can expect Him to begin to work miracles for you."

"Is this all I need to do?"

"No, God has more for you. Remember when we talked about the Tabernacle plan? You are now at the brazen altar. You've begun to die to sin in repentance, by telling the Lord you're sorry for your sin. You've begun

in your commitment to God. But there is more to the Tabernacle plan than that. After full repentance, you get to go to the laver of water—that is like baptism. And then you go to the Holy Place. That is like when God will fill you with the Holy Ghost."

"Oh," she said not comprehending, but that was okay. She had made a step, and Jimmy could be patient for God to work in His time.

Barb's kids came bounding into the room. "We have to go behind the couch," announced Chantel. "We're going to show you the puppet show of Elijah." Jeannie followed the girls over to the couch, and puppets appeared from behind to tell their story. Ashley had a puppet on her hand, too. Once in a while it would appear, but it didn't add much to the plot.

Jimmy answered the phone that evening. It was a pastor from Allentown. "Yes, Brother Matthews. . . . Sure I'd be happy to follow up on that. Okay . . . she's a widow . . . uh huh. And when did she visit your church? Okay . . . right. Her name is Emma Kelley. Right . . . has relatives there. Okay . . . let me write this down . . . and she really enjoyed the service . . . and so she already knows we are coming. She's waiting for us to visit? Okay, what was the address again? Thanks. I got it."

Jeannie and Jimmy had to take family times when they could get them. Jimmy worked the midnight shift and tried to get some sleep in the mornings. Since Jimmy didn't have the money for a gas dryer yet, one of the family times was at the laundromat. They would start the wash and then go across the street to shop for groceries. Ashley enjoyed being with both her Mom and Dad. She acted like a little queen, sitting on a shopping cart throne,

making royal requests for her favorite cereal and other favors. While her royal edicts were often honored, at times she had to defer to a cheaper item or one that was better for her nutritionally.

It was at the laundromat that they met Gary, a lonely young man who had committed his life to Christ when he was visiting some family members in Pittsburgh. Now he was "looking for a church where he could be fed and grow in the Word."

"I'll make you a deal," said Jimmy. "How about helping to start a church where you can grow and be fed?"

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Gary.

"We're starting a church in town, and we're looking for people like you who are hungry for the Word," said Jimmy. "We can start by having a Bible study. Then I can tell you more about it. It would be the Word. You'd love it."

"Sounds great," said Gary, and that was Bible study number two.

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Gossan, Al, Jr., Kirk Bates, and Galen Walters. *Into His Marvelous Light.* (Self-contained two-lesson Bible study, available through the Home Missions Division.)

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Discussion

When a home missionary family goes to a city, should they have a plan to make contacts, or will it just be enough to meet people naturally? What ways could they devise to meet more people? Are there specific kinds of canvassing that are more appropriate than others?

To the Teacher

Involve the student in some hands-on experience. Introduce either the *Public Opinion Poll,* or the Bible study *Into His Marvelous Light.* See the booklet *Spiritual Reproduction* for a sense of how to conduct the survey. *Into His Marvelous Light* is fairly self-explanatory. Both the survey and the Bible study are available from the General Home Missions Division. Present the material to the students. Then take the students to a neighborhood and have them conduct the survey.

Assignment

Record in a journal your experience of conducting a public opinion poll. How did you feel about it? How effective was it? What were your fears? What was the response? What would you change on the survey in order to make it more effective? If you teach a Bible study, record this experience as well.

Chapter 12

Drawing the Net

"Oh, well, keep fishing"

Jimmy had just finished eating supper when the telephone rang. He picked up the receiver quickly. "Hello," he offered, and after hearing a familiar voice he remarked, "Hey, Pastor Johnson, it sure is good to hear from you again."

"Well, I've got to keep up with how things are going out East."

"It's going great. We have seventy-five people now on our mailing list, and we're meeting new people all the time. It looks like I might start my third Bible study."

"Really? With who?"

"I had a guy who tried to recruit me to sell soap. It was some kind of networking, a kind of pyramid marketing plan, and even though I didn't buy anything, he offered to take a Bible study. I start Monday with him."

"Take my advice, Jimmy. Don't buy big-ticket items just so people will come into church. I bought a vacuum

from a guy whom I thought I could get in church. It's still in the closet, but I have no idea where he is."

Jimmy laughed. "Don't worry. I don't have anything to buy a big-ticket item with."

"Hey, Jimmy, whatever happened to that fellow from India that you met when you first went out there?"

"I don't know. He gave us the room number of the dorm that he lived in, but when we went there to meet him, they said it was his room last year but they don't know where he lives now. We've gone to that same restaurant where we met him, but he doesn't work there anymore."

"Oh, well, keep fishing, Jimmy."

"Guess what I did, Pastor Johnson."

"What?"

"I went to the meeting of the ministerial association here in town. I was really scared, but I went."

"Oh, really?"

"I heard that they take turns giving the devotional spot on the local radio, and they also take turns conducting services at a local nursing home, so I went to see if I could be part of the rotation."

"How was it?"

"It was kind of funny, really. This one guy was smoking a pipe. He had on a blazer and a turtleneck and had a chain around his neck. Everyone else wore casual clothes, and all seemed to be on a first-name basis. They all called each other by their first names and acted sort of laid back. One or two talked down to me, but I made a couple of friends."

"Did you get some free air time on the radio?"

"Yeah, as soon as I pay my dues of ten dollars they'll

put me in the rotation. It seems there's a real budget crunch in the ministerial association. They need more money for postage and stuff."

"Well, good. I know it's hard to let you're guard down, but if you let yourself be real with some of those men, not only could you make some genuine friendships, but you never know what opportunity will present itself to share truth. Just don't try to be something that you're not."

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy, and then changing the subject, he said, "Hey, you should hear Ashley talk now."

"Well, put her on the phone. And I want to talk to Jeannie some, too."

There was the muffled sound the receiver being passed around and then a voice declared, "Passa Johnsa, hiiii, this is Ashley."

The next evening Jeannie was looking at the calender. "Say, Jimmy, next month you have the second Friday circled and it says, 'Set church in order.' What is that all about?"

"Oh, that. Well, for legal purposes we need to officially do that so that we can conduct business."

"How you do it?"

"Well, we adopt bylaws and set up officers. That's where we appoint our first trustees and . . ."

"Jimmy, do we have enough people to appoint as trustees?"

"We'll use the district superintendent, presbyter, and home missions director."

"Does that mean that they will have to come to our church every week?"

"Of course not. It's just for our protection. By the

way, you are the church secretary."

"Thanks, Jimmy. Thanks a lot."

"The first business meeting went without a hitch. There were seven in attendance including the presbyter, Brother Andrews. They basically followed the procedure he got out of a pamphlet from the Home Missions Division *Church Business Setup and Management.* They ratified a charter that they adapted from a neighboring church. After about twenty-five minutes all the business was done, and they went upstairs for pie and ice cream.

Jimmy usually went to the bank on Fridays. Sometimes he went by himself, but on occasion they went as a family. It was Friday again, and Jimmy pulled into the parking lot of the bank. He opened Jeannie's door, and she got out and took Ashley by the hand as they walked toward the door. She turned and asked, "Well, are you going to do it?"

"I'd like to, Jeannie, but I'm just not ready yet," said Jimmy nervously.

"But the book said you're supposed to introduce yourself to the president of the bank and tell him you're starting a church. It said that the sooner you get your relationship developed the better it will be down the road when you need to borrow money."

"I know what the book said, but I'm just not ready yet."

"But, Jimmy, now that the church is set in order you're opening the church checking account. It would be the perfect time to introduce to the bank president the fact that we are going to start a church."

He only shrugged.

"Jimmy, just give me one good reason why you don't

want to introduce yourself to the president of the bank."

Jimmy stopped in the middle of the bank lobby and turned to look his wife squarely in the eyes. "Because the United Pentecostal Church of West Chester is opening its checking account with total assets of twenty-five dollars, and the only reason that I'm doing it right now is because someone sent us a check in the mail made out in the name of the church."

"Oh," said Jeannie sheepishly.

"By the way, Jeannie, remember, you are the church secretary."

Jimmy went up to the information desk and asked, "Could I speak to someone about opening an account?"

"Personal or commercial account?"

"Commercial."

"Would you like to speak to one of our vice-presidents?"

"I'd love to," said Jimmy winking at Jeannie.

That night, Jimmy got a call from a lady in a neighboring church. "Hi, this is Marlene. I met you at the rally. You may not remember me, but I gave you the address of my brother to visit. His name is Jim Walker."

"Oh, yes, Marlene. I remember. Let me check my list. Just a second. Yes, I stopped by their house once and no one was home, and I tried to call a couple times but I never found anyone home. I put them on our mailing list, and we intended to try to visit them again."

"Well, I can't overemphasize how interested that they are. I just got off the phone with Jim, and he told me that he is waiting for your call. They have three children, and they really want a Bible study. Right now they don't attend any church."

"Thanks, Marlene. I'll call them as soon as I get off the phone with you. And thanks so much for your concern."

Jimmy called and set up a visit. Everything that Marlene said was true. Here was a family that was ready and eager to get involved. Within the week they were giving a family Bible study to Jim and Karen Walker and their three children, Chris, Tim, and Tracy. Jimmy taught the parents while Jeannie taught Chris, Tim, and Tracy, three stair-step children ages eleven, ten, and nine. After the first lesson, she brought them upstairs and they did a puppet show for their parents about Adam and Eve and the first temptation. Jimmy was sure that the parents got more out of the puppet show than they did out of his lesson, but they were gaining rapport, and it would take time before they would be ready to respond to the Lord with a life commitment.

The children each had folders, and Jeannie made a time line as they walked through the Bible. Each week they got new stickers to put on their time line. Since the children were old enough, she taught them the books of the Bible. Jim and Karen were proud parents and were excited to see their family doing something together spiritually.

Jimmy and Jeannie talked about it later. "They are really hungry, Jimmy."

"I know that, but I'm going to take it real slow. I know they visited a Pentecostal church before, but I don't want to scare them away or anything."

"Whatever you think, Jimmy."

"I'm not going to talk to them about the Holy Ghost until they see it on the chart and read it in the Bible."

"That's all right with me, Jimmy. Whatever you think."

They finished the Old Testament and started learning about the Gospels. Jimmy explained, "And even though He didn't deserve to die, He did it anyway. Jesus hung suspended between heaven and earth, dying not for his own sins but for the sins of the world."

Jim and Karen stared as if transfixed by the chart that showed Jesus on the cross. There was silence for several seconds before Jim asked, "Why did Jesus say, 'My God my God, why has thou forsaken me?' "

Jimmy wasn't sure why Jim was asking the question. Was it a doctrinal problem that he was having? Jimmy had done a study on how Jesus often referred to God as if the Spirit of God were remote from Him when in fact God was never away from Him. The reference Hebrews 9:14 came to mind to show that Jesus was not God-forsaken, but when Jimmy started into a deep theological explanation, he felt suddenly as if that wasn't what Jim was asking at all. So he said simply, "Jim, Jesus took on Himself the sins of the whole world. He took my sins and your sins, and at that moment He felt like the worst sinner in the whole world."

When Jimmy gave that simple explanation, something happened that he could never totally explain—it was as if the presence of the Lord came into the room in a new and unusual way. God was present in such a way that it reminded him of a church service when the convicting power of God demanded a response. It was the kind of feeling that swept a congregation when Pastor Johnson was about to give an altar call. It was there in that kitchen. Jim's eyes filled with tears and Karen's hands

started trembling. Neither of them said anything, but they obviously wanted to respond to what they were feeling.

Jimmy didn't know what to do. If he were at church he would invite them to the altar, but he had no altar to invite them to. He knew he should tell them about the Holy Ghost, but he was too nervous. He needed to tell them to do something, and so he decided to risk all the rapport that he had built up. "Let's just raise our hands and praise the Lord!" he said, awkwardly, and he was surprised when they actually did it. He thought later, he could probably have told them to do anything and they would have done it. When Karen opened her mouth to praise the Lord, her speech became garbled, and Jimmy recognized that she was ready to receive the Holy Ghost. "Don't worry what it sounds like," said Jimmy, encouraging her, and all three praised the Lord for what they felt.

Jeannie was downstairs teaching the children when she heard a familiar sound from upstairs. "What's that?" asked one of the children.

"Your Mom and Dad are praising the Lord."

"Can we go see?"

"Maybe in a couple of minutes." Jeannie waited several minutes and then felt she could wait no longer. She brought three curious children upstairs just in time to see their mother receiving the Holy Ghost.

Jeannie could hardly wait to call home and tell everyone the news! "And then, Mom, I came upstairs with the kids and there was Karen, speaking in other tongues. . . . Well, no . . . even though they would come if we started, I think Jimmy wants to wait a little longer. Pastor Johnson told him not to rush it. . . . It's only been a few months, Mom. . . . Well, they're having a revival

in West Grove this week, and Jimmy thought we might take them over there. Jim says he really wants the Holy Ghost. And Karen wants to be baptized. . . . No, we'll just continue to meet on Saturday nights. After the Bible study, Jimmy is going to start teaching *My Father's House* discipleship course. . . . No, Mom, we're not worried about them going someplace else. . . . No, they want to start having services right away, too, but Jimmy doesn't want to concentrate all his efforts on the same few people. Even when we start, we'll just have one service a week. . . . Yeah, Mom, really, I'm sure it will work out. Okay, goodbye, and thanks."

"She was thrilled about Karen," said Jeannie, "and she wonders how soon I'm going to start Sunday school."

Jimmy just smiled. "I'm glad she was happy," he said.

To the Teacher

Introduce *Exploring God's Word* and the teacher's manual. Go through a lesson and explain techniques of teaching as outlined in *Spiritual Reproduction through Home Bible Study.*

Assignment

Write out how you would present the plan of salvation as you are teaching *Exploring God's Word.*

Chapter 13

Before the First Service

"Yes, this is Pastor Porter"

Jimmy had been in West Chester several months when he made application for his general license. He was scheduled to meet the district board at the spring conference in Allentown. The board was meeting at a local motel. He didn't know if he would meet Cecil there again, trying again for his license, but decided not to listen to any of his advice if he ran into him. The same men who interviewed him to come to Pennsylvania would interview him again. Jimmy hadn't altogether recovered from the first experience, so he asked Jeannie to come with him and wait for him outside the door of the boardroom.

"What good will that do?" she asked.

"I don't know, but it sure couldn't do any harm." Dutifully she went, and dutifully she waited outside the door of the boardroom when he was called in. For half an hour the board asked him questions about his ministry, his church, and his personal life. Jimmy mopped his brow

with a handkerchief throughout the interview.

"And how would you conduct a funeral?" one man asked.

"Well, I've never conducted one before, but I have a book on funeral sermons that I bought at a yard sale." One of the men on the board coughed audibly. Jimmy continued. "At my home church, I saw Pastor Johnson conduct funerals, and one time I took notes in the back of my Bible on how he did it. If you want to see, I can show you. But I'm not sure if they do funerals here the same way they do back in Kansas. Brother Johnson told me that before I conducted a funeral, I should talk to someone, a funeral director, I guess, to see what the local customs are."

The fact that Jimmy had thought about it seemed to make an impact on the coughing board member, for he seemed more satisfied now. One of the men asked, "And what is your stance on spiritual communion?"

Since Jimmy had never heard of spiritual communion, that was a hard one to answer. He said, "I'll tell what I'll do. I'll study it out and get back to you." He wasn't sure what they thought of that answer. Back and forth it went, like a tennis match. For Jimmy there was more than one missed shot. Finally, they dismissed him to an adjoining waiting room while they talked about him. He could hear them mumbling about him, and after several minutes, they called him back in and congratulated him. Evidently he had passed. Brother Shepherd said, "The board wishes me to inform you that you have been recommended for general license."

Soon the door opened from the meeting room and Jimmy burst out of it as quickly as possible. When he

looked up at Jeannie, he put his thumb up in the air, and she welcomed him with a big hug.

"We're going to put this in the paper," she said. "The headlines will read, 'Jimmy Porter Impresses District Board of Pennsylvania with His Astute Bible Knowledge.' "

"Thank you, thank you," said Jimmy in a bow as if receiving accolades from the entire city of West Chester. "I want to thank all the people who made this possible. And to my constituents, I now say that you can count on me to marry and bury. And to all my supporters, I say . . ."

But before Jimmy could say any more, he and Jeannie hurriedly walked down the hall, for the entire district board was leaving the meeting room, evidently breaking for supper. "I think I remembered something I had to do right away," said Jimmy pushing Jeannie along speedily.

They did put a news release in the *Daily Local News.* Although it didn't make the headlines, it came out on the Friday church news right under the weekly sermonette by a local clergyman. This week it was an article by Dr. Doverton on being friendly in the community. Jimmy's news release read, "On Friday, April 3, Jimmy Porter was granted general license by the United Pentecostal Church International in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Jimmy, age 28, along with his wife, Jeannie, and four-year old daughter, Ashley, recently moved to West Chester to organize the United Pentecostal Church of West Chester. Currently they are holding Bible studies and plan to have their first official service sometime in September. The United Pentecostal Church emphasizes that Christ

works in the life of the individual and that the Lord desires to give us daily happiness as we walk with Him. Anyone interested in having a home Bible study or needing the service of a minister should call the number listed below."

"Pretty good picture, huh?" said Jimmy.

"That's a handsome man," said Jeannie teasing.

Two days later the phone rang. "Uh, is this Pastor Porter?"

"Who? I mean, yes, this is Reverend Porter."

"Well, me and my sweetie want to get married, and we saw your picture in the paper, and I was wondering if you could marry us."

"Well, I, uh . . ."

"You're Pentecostal, right?"

"Yes."

"Good, 'cuz we want someone Spirit-filled."

"Well, I, uh, I don't generally marry people unless I, er, have a Bible study with them first," said Jimmy making up a rule on the spot.

"Fine with me. How long will it take?"

"Well, I usually have to have a couple of sessions or so."

"I suppose. We kind of wanted to get married right away."

"Why don't you come over to my house tonight and we can talk about it?"

"What time?"

"Is 7:30 all right?"

"Good enough for me. I don't care."

Jimmy told him how to get to his house, and as soon as he was off the phone, he made another phone call. "Pastor Johnson . . . I need some advice."

It was Pastor Johnson who told him how to register at the courthouse and that he would need to show his general license there. Jimmy was hoping he could stall off any marriage until he got his general license in the mail. "And another thing," said Pastor Johnson. "Is it going to be your policy just to marry anyone who asks?"

"Well, no. I heard about this one minister who used home Bible studies and won people who wanted to get married."

"Maybe you'll win them to the Lord, Jimmy. But I've found that often times people who want to get married are the ones who listen the least to counseling. They may appear to listen to what you have to say, but really, they figure that they know more than you do, and besides, they are in love, and things are just bound to work out."

"But what if they really make a commitment to the Lord?"

"Maybe they will. But sometimes people who want to get married will say anything that the minister wants in order to get his blessing. A lot of times people who can't be married by their own minister will seek to get married by someone they look up in the telephone book. In that case, it is not always the best policy to get involved. Tell me, Jimmy, have either this man or his fiancee ever been married before?"

"I don't know, Pastor Johnson."

"Are they compatible, do they have strong morals, are they equally yoked, or are you marrying two people who would be better off not married? You know, couples don't need a minister to marry them in order to get legally married. They can go to the justice of the peace for that. You can't prevent two adults from getting married, but

that doesn't mean you have to perform the ceremony. I'm not telling you what to do. Ministers use different criteria to determine who they will marry. What you need to do is work out your own convictions in this matter."

"Wow!" said Jimmy. "You've given me a lot to think about. I'm not sure if I should have gotten involved."

"I'm not saying that either," said Pastor Johnson. "But I will say that if you do commit to marry this couple, you'd better give them a lot of hoops to jump through before you do it."

"Thanks," said Jimmy. "I will."

Jimmy answered the door at 7:30 and led the couple into his living room. After a few niceties, he asked some important questions. "Now, Rick, have you ever been married before?"

"Three times, but that was before I knew the Lord."

"I see. And Jane, how about you."

"Just once."

"And I presume that was also before you knew the Lord?"

"Well, I sure didn't know Him very well."

"Now look, Reverend," Rick said angrily, "if you got a problem or something then just . . ."

"Well, we can come back to this later," Jimmy hedged. "Now, Jane, do you have any children?"

"Four," she said.

"And they live with you? Do they have any problems with your upcoming marriage?"

"They do what I tell them," she said.

"And they do what I tell them, too." said Rick angrily.

"I see," said Jimmy, who really was beginning to see. In the end, he stretched the Bible studies for as long as

he could, hoping for some miraculous conversion to take place, but none did. He finally persuaded them to go to the justice of the peace to get married.

One good thing resulted from the incident, however. About a month after the wedding, Jimmy got a call from the county sheriff. "Hello, Reverend Porter?"

"Yes?"

"Do you know a Rick Chansky?"

"Yes, I do."

"He said that he was one of your parishioners."

"Well, I have counseled him in time past."

"Well, anyway he wants you to come and start a Bible study here in the county jail. It seems that he has several men interested in meeting."

"Has he started a Bible study there? I don't understand."

"Rick is serving time here."

"Oh, I see."

"Reverend, Rick has been making quite a stir here. He has been talking to several men about the Bible, and when we told him that he couldn't hold a study, he started demanding his constitutional rights and so on. Well, of course, he doesn't have any such rights, but as a compromise he suggested that you come once a week and teach the men who wanted to come to the study."

"Would that be all right?"

"You'll have to discuss it with the captain, but he'll probably approve it."

"Uh, how long has Rick been in."

"About a week on a ninety-day sentence."

"Do you mind if I ask you what he is in for?"

"Well, that bottom line is that he was chasing his wife

with a butcher knife."

"Thanks, Officer. I'll be up later to see about it."

That evening Jimmy talked to Rick. "Praise the Lord, Reverend Porter," said an excited Rick in the visiting room. "The Lord is really moving in the jail here, and I think that the door is open for Bible studies."

"Great," said Jimmy, "just great."

Fortunately the captain was very nice and didn't blame Jimmy at all for any failure by Rick. In fact he said, "Look, if they want to come to a Bible study on Friday night rather than just stay in their cells, more power to you. We had one group up here giving studies for a while, and the ministerial association takes turns in coming in, but I have no problem at all with you coming in as well."

So Jimmy started on Friday nights at 7:00 p.m. He usually had ten to twelve in the study, but it varied quite a bit from week to week.

Perhaps he was feeling good about the way God opened the door to the jail Bible studies. Perhaps it was the fact that he was teaching three other Bible studies. Whatever the reason, one day on a whim, Jimmy dressed up in his best suit and went down to the city office buildings. He stopped at several offices and handed out his card before stopping by the mayor's office.

"Could I see the mayor, please?"

"He's not in," said the secretary. "Can I take a message?"

He gave her a business card and said, "Just tell him that Pastor Jimmy Porter was in to see him."

"I'll do that," said the secretary.

Jimmy came home and told Jeannie what he did. "You would have thought I was running for some office," said

Jimmy, pleased with himself.

"So when are you going to meet the president of the bank?" said Jeannie.

"When I get more than seventy-five dollars in the account," Jimmy replied. At the rate he was going, that would be awhile.

Jimmy and Jeannie formed a "fellowship circle." It didn't really happen on purpose; it was sort of accidental. They invited two of the families over one Saturday night for some ice cream and immediately the group clicked. They talked and laughed and Jimmy read a passage of Scripture, and they were doing what Jeannie promised herself that she would never do: have families in her home for so long that she almost had to beg them to leave.

Jimmy closed the door as they left and then turned apologetically to Jeannie. "I'm sorry they stayed so late, hon. It won't happen again."

Jeannie smiled consolingly. "That's fine, Jimmy. We can do it as much as you want. But you've got to promise me that when we start having service you won't invite them all upstairs for ice cream afterwards, because Ashley was all tuckered out and . . ."

"I promise."

The next Saturday night the two families came over, but there were several additions. Again, it was hard to get rid of them, and Jeannie asked, "So when are we going to start this church?"

"What do you think about September 10? We can plan for a big splash and announce it to the community in a big way. That still gives us plenty of time to plan. And when we start, we want to be ready. We'll put news

releases in the paper and make a real big thing out of it. It'll be great."

"Right," said Jeannie. "I'm sure Emma Kelly could be in charge of refreshments and everyone could contribute."

"I could give out certificates to those who have completed Bible studies. I'll make a big deal out of it. The Walkers have finished and so has Gary."

"Karen Walker could have a little children's choir, and . . ."

"Hey, you could do one of those puppet shows with the kids. Barb's kids already know several."

Jeannie took out a red felt-tip pen and circled September 10 on the calendar.

Discussion

Discuss possible methods to get known in a community when a family moves there. Should they visit churches of other denominations? Why or why not? Should they advertise as soon as they get to town? If so, in what way? What community groups could give them visibility within a city?

Assignment

Design a twelve-month plan of what you would do if you moved to a city to start a church. Present the plans in class orally for discussion.

Chapter 14

Early Worship Services

"Study hard but keep it simple"

It was a number of months before they had their first service, and Jimmy and Jeannie never regretted waiting. For a few months prior to their opening service they took a group to Norristown on Sunday nights. But finally the day came when they were ready.

They had their first service in the community room of the Commonwealth Federal Bank, and the news release read: "On Sunday, September 10, at 2:30 p.m., the United Pentecostal Church of West Chester will hold its first service in the community room of the Commonwealth Federal Bank. Some months ago, Reverend and Mrs. James Porter moved to West Chester with their four-year-old daughter Ashley to organize the United Pentecostal Church. In honor of the birthday celebration of the church, they will be serving birthday cake after the service."

"I don't like this picture," said Jeannie.

"Why? That's the picture you gave them, and it didn't

cost anything to have them put it in as a news release."

"It makes my cheeks look too fat."

There was a general hustle and bustle to get ready for the service, and it continued until September 10. Two days before their service Jimmy tuned in to the local radio station in time for the local community calender. He heard the announcer say, "This is WCOJ, 1420 AM, the voice of Chester County, and it is time for the community calendar. The United Pentecostal Church of West Chester will be having its first service at two-thirty in the community room of the bank. The Reverend James Porter, his wife, Jeannie, and their daughter, Ashley, invite you to join their church family in a celebration of this special occasion. Special music will be provided and refreshments will be served.

"On Sunday morning from 9:00 to noon there will be pancake breakfast sponsored by the Lions Club at . . ." Jimmy turned the radio off. He could hardly wait to tell Jeannie that he heard the announcement.

Some young people from the West Grove church provided special music for the service. The children had a special program of singing and Jimmy preached a brief sermonette. Throughout the service, flashes went off as cameras recorded the event, and a festive atmosphere prevailed. The community room was packed. Counting local visitors and the people from West Grove they had fifty-two people in all. It was one of the highlights of Jimmy's life. Even the ice cream and cake tasted special.

The second service was a truer picture of what home missions would be like. They held it in the family room of their home because the bank would only let them have the community room periodically for special occasions.

Although the landlord didn't want a stationary sign in their front yard, he said it would be all right to put out a professionally painted sign that said, "United Pentecostal Church meeting here" during service times. The other advertisement they had was a free announcement on the church page of the newspaper, which allowed all churches to give the time of their services and any other information they deemed important.

When a neighboring church gave him a lectern and twenty-five folding chairs, Jimmy thought he was rich. The chairs filled up the family room and the group that gathered there for service filled over half the chairs. Besides Jimmy, Jeannie, and Ashley, there were Jim and Karen's family and Gary, the fellow they met in the laundromat. Gary didn't have the Holy Ghost yet, but the week before they started having services in their home, they baptized him in the church at West Grove, thirty miles away. And then there was Tyler, who was attending West Chester University but was originally saved in a United Pentecostal church in California. Tyler brought a friend, and then Barb, the real estate lady, showed up with a friend. Her two girls were there as well. Emma Kelly was there, and perhaps most significant of all, Jeannie's mom and dad drove out for the service. Her dad took a week off work to be with them a few days.

Jimmy wasn't sure how he was going to run the service. In the first service, visiting musicians helped a lot and it hardly seemed like a home missions service at all. But in this service, Jimmy was going to conduct all of the preliminaries himself. Last week, it seemed like a general conference. This week, it seemed like reality. Their service was to start at 2:30, and so when the big hand hit

the six, Jimmy promptly stepped up to the Bible stand. He could almost hear Pastor Johnson advising him, "Make sure to start on time, no matter how many people are there. Don't get into any bad habits, like starting service five or ten minutes late."

Jimmy smiled, thinking that Pastor Johnson's presence seemed so real he should be counted in the attendance. Then he began to sing the praise chorus "Hallelujah." He sang it softly at first without any introduction. Pastor Johnson had told him, "Be relaxed, and don't run it like a big service," and he kept thinking of that advice as he sang the chorus. Jeannie had a good voice, and he could hear her sing even with his eyes closed. The presence of God was sweet, even though the song wasn't loud; and he got lost in the chorus that he was singing.

When Jimmy opened his eyes, a strange couple was standing at the door. Well, not strange exactly, but new, and they looked a little bit scared. Jimmy wasn't sure if it was proper, but he walked over to them, shook their hand, and gave them a big smile. "I'm Jimmy Porter, and we're really glad you came today." They nodded and returned his smile as they found a place to sit in the room.

As Jimmy headed back to the Bible stand, Jeannie spontaneously started out in another chorus, and everyone began singing again. They sang the chorus once and started it again before Jimmy could concentrate on worship. He was too excited at having new faces and wondered how those people found out about the service. But soon he was lost again in the song. They sang it through several times.

All of a sudden everything was silent, and Jimmy realized he needed to do something else. He thought of

opening the floor to testimonies but decided against it because he was unsure what some of the folks would say. He decided to sing another worship chorus. Since he couldn't think of any off hand, he asked Jeannie, "Do you want to start another chorus?" She responded quickly and led in a chorus that seemed just right. In this way, almost accidentally, he established a pattern of worship that was unique to their situation, particularly in the early months of their church.

"Chris," he said, "will you pass the offering plate?" And Jim and Karen's boy delightedly held the plate in front of all the people. He got a little confused as to what to do when he was finished, but his dad pointed up to Jimmy and then he ran up to the Bible stand with the plate. It took about half a chorus to collect the offering, hardly a major event in the service. Jimmy didn't have an usher because Pastor Johnson had advised him not to appoint anyone to positions right away. He had told Jimmy, "Everyone can have a job, but be careful of giving titles right away." Now Jimmy decided that if he wasn't going to give anyone the title of usher, maybe he should at least explain a bit more about what he wanted an usher to do.

Before Jimmy began his message he said, "And we want to acknowledge some very special people today. They drove further than any of us to be in church. I know their granddaughter Ashley is glad to have them here, as well as her parents. This is Mom and Dad Smith, and we'd like each of them to say a word of greeting."

Jeannie's mom thanked the Lord for a few things and then said, "We're just so happy for you kids," and then started to cry. Jimmy colored a little bit and worried about

his image, especially to the new couple, but then broke into a smile. Mom was Mom, and he was thankful she could be there to share this with them. Because he was relaxed, everyone else seemed to enjoy the testimony. "And we want you to know that we're praying for you," she continued. "And believing that God will bring revival to this God-forsaken East Coast!"

"Amen," said Jim and Karen, but Jimmy wasn't sure whether he appreciated their encouragement on this point.

"And if there is anything we can do for you, Dad and I want you to know that we're behind you. We're certainly praying for you daily."

Dad Smith was a little more generic in his testimony, simply thanking God for the blessings that He had given.

Soon it was time for Jimmy to minister the Word. Without further preliminaries, he announced, "Today I'd like to teach a Bible lesson, and Jeannie will take the children for a Bible class." Jeannie gathered the brood of various-sized children to the back, while Jimmy opened his Bible to the Gospel of Luke.

"Just tell Bible stories." That's what Pastor Johnson had told him. "Study hard, but keep it simple." Those words from Pastor Johnson were scribbled across the top of Jimmy's outline.

"People still make a living as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee," Jimmy began, "but I want to tell you the story of a fisherman who lived almost two thousand years ago." And then Jimmy told the story of Peter. He worked at making the characters real, even across the centuries.

"So what could he do when he saw the miraculous catch? He knew this was no ordinary man. Suddenly

he was possessed with a knowledge that he was in the presence of God. And he didn't feel very good about himself. At that point, he did something very unusual. He fell to his knees and said, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord.'

"There is something about the presence of God that made Peter feel very vulnerable and exposed. But Jesus didn't want him to go away. He wanted to forgive him . . . and change him . . . and make him into something he never dreamed possible. . . ."

Jimmy hardly raised his voice as he taught the lesson, but when he was done, he felt the convicting power of God. There was no altar to come to, and there was no room at the front of the family room. Jimmy was at a loss momentarily as to what to do. "Let's just bow our heads," he said finally, as that seemed like the right thing to do. The audience prayed obediently, and even though there was no music, it hardly seemed necessary.

Tears were coursing down Gary's cheeks, and he lifted his hand to the Lord. Jimmy quietly placed his hand on Gary's back. As Gary prayed his praise grew louder and filled the room. It was a pure expression of love for the Lord, and this seemed to encourage others to worship freely. At first, Jimmy worried about what the visitors might think, but he could find nothing offensive in the uninhibited expression of love to the Lord that took place.

It was perhaps twenty minutes or so before Jeannie brought the children back in, and they closed the worship service with a praise chorus. Although Gary didn't receive the Holy Ghost that week, Jimmy felt that it wouldn't be long before he did. Although the new couple didn't seem to be as moved as Gary, they knelt and prayed, too.

When the service was dismissed, Jimmy stood near the back and shook everyone's hand. It was a funny thing—no one seemed anxious to leave. They all seemed to be enjoying each other's company. Gary introduced himself to the couple. Their name was Hanson. They had seen the news release about the new church in the paper and had come to check it out.

Children came in and out the door, and there was much laughing and light-hearted conversation. Jeannie's mom shook Mr. and Mrs. Hanson's hands as they left. "Make sure you come back now," she said.

"We will, we will," said the lady and gentleman as they walked toward their car.

Ten minutes after the new couple left, the others found their way to their cars and Jeannie and Jimmy were left standing in the foyer with Mom and Dad Smith. Mom Smith held Ashley while Jeannie's dad started bringing their suitcases down from the guest bedroom.

"Mom and I are going to buy some takeout chicken so you can have something to eat before you hit the road, Dad."

"No need to do that," said Jeannie's dad as he packed the trunk, but they were already driving away, so his call went unheeded.

Fifteen minutes later the chicken was served hot from the carton as the family enjoyed a quick meal together.

"Sorry we've got to leave so quick, but Dad's got work on Tuesday."

"We're just glad you could come," said Jimmy. "It meant so much having you in our service."

"I can't believe how much Ashley has grown," said Sister Smith. "It's only been a few months but she is just

growing like a weed. But my, what a pretty weed." She smiled as she held her and softly said, "I just wish she didn't have to live so far away from her Memom."

"This is a nice town," said Jeannie's mother as she carried the last handbag out the front door, "and you and Jimmy are doing such a great job! I can hardly wait to tell everyone back home." Jeannie's dad put this last bag into the trunk, and they prayed together. Then Jeannie's mom and dad got into the car. They started to back down the driveway when the car stopped. Jeannie's mom had forgotten to give Ashley her last hug and ran up the drive to do it. "Come here, sugar," she said, holding her in her arms.

When Ashley chanted, "Memom, Memom, I love you," Jeannie's mom burst into tears and headed back toward the car.

The car backed slowly down the drive. Jeannie's dad yelled, "We love you kids! Keep up the great work!" Jeannie's mom didn't say anything. She was too busy crying. With several beeps of the horn they were down the street and on their journey back across the country. Jimmy kept his arm around Jeannie as she held Ashley, and all three of them waved. Jeannie didn't cry, at least not as much as she thought she might.

Jeannie decided right then and there that she needed a helper. Jimmy was against appointing anyone to be a teacher right away, but she insisted. "Look," she said. "We'll use the master-teacher concept. I'll tell the story, and then I can get a helper for the project to do it on their age level."

"Okay, Jeannie, how is that supposed to work if the students are on different lessons?"

"There are a couple of ways we can do it," she said. "I have some vacation Bible school material in which all the age levels are on the same lesson. Or I could use the materials from Word Aflame Publications for the Primary class and gear it up or down."

"But, Jeannie, Pastor Johnson said to wait before you gave people positions!"

"I'm not talking about positions. I want to give them work! And Jimmy Porter, if you think I can handle infants to teenagers, you've got another think coming."

In the end he knew she was right, but he advised that she let the helpers know that their position was temporary, and they might be changing things around from time to time.

Discussion

Discuss a home missions Sunday school. What kind of minimum standard should be set for teachers? What methods of teaching will make the best teachers? What curricula serve best?

Assignment

Design a news release for a first service. How would it differ if it were to be aired on the radio than if it were to be run in the paper? Use *Public Relations,* a booklet by the Home Missions Division, to design the news releases.

Chapter 15

Discipling the First Families

"China cups in a mud puddle"

The phone rang and a familiar voice asked, "So how is it going?"

"Oh, hi, Pastor Johnson. It's going fairly well. We've been averaging twenty for our monthly service, but that is only because of our food evangelism."

"What do you mean, food evangelism?"

"One Sunday out of the month when we want to make a big push, we get the community room of the bank. Then we have something special—either a thanksgiving praise dinner, or a children's program, or something like that. We contact everyone on our mailing list and make a big push. We can usually get twenty-five to thirty-five people for that. But there is one common denominator that brings people in—that's food. That's why Jeannie calls it food evangelism."

"Oh, I get it," said Pastor Johnson laughing.

"Otherwise we run fifteen to twenty on a Sunday."

"Didn't you rent a motel meeting room last month?"

"Yeah. We rented one of those scary prophecy films. It seemed to work pretty well. We had a packed house. One lady received the Holy Ghost afterwards, but I never really got her to commit to our church or anything."

"How do you advertise for those things?"

"All different ways. We have a hundred people on our mailing list now. We mail to them. Then we give a news release to the radio station and one to the newspaper. They will advertise for us free of charge. Then we follow up with a personal contact to as many people as we can—either with shoe leather, or we let Ma Bell do the walking for us."

"How do you have time for all of that?"

"Well, so far Jeannie hasn't had to go to work, and frankly, she does most of it."

"Well, I hope it works out so she can stay home and keep helping."

"So do I."

"So how are Jim and Karen coming along?"

"Oh, fine; they're wonderful people."

"How is Gary?"

"He's a hard nut to crack. He thinks he needs to work for salvation. I can't get him to believe that God accepts him just where he is."

"Oh, well, that's all right. He'll come along. How about that real estate lady?"

"She started going to a charismatic prayer group, and I'm afraid that they really messed her up." He paused before sharing his concern. "Pastor Johnson, I seem to

be stalemated before I ever get going. I need your advice."

"Yeah, what do you mean?"

"Well, it just seems that I've been working with the same few people for the last few months. And they seem to demand so much of my attention that I wouldn't have time for another home Bible study right now if I got one. Take Jim and Karen, for instance. They are great people, but they seem to need a lot of our time. I'm afraid if I take this much time to win and disciple every family, I'll never be able to build a church."

"Now, Jimmy, let me give you some advice. Don't do as I did, but learn from someone who didn't do it right. When we first came to this city, I won a couple of families, and then I hurried on to win others, but in the long run I wish I would have spent more time with my first two families. When people came into the church, they didn't view me as their role model. I was the pastor, and I was on another level from them. They learned most by looking at the families who were already in the church and patterning themselves after them. Jimmy, if I would only have spent a little more time with the first families, I could have saved myself a lot of headaches. You're not wasting time at all but investing it into making sure that your church has a good foundation."

"Okay, Pastor, I hear you, and that's good advice. Just help me keep my shirt on and be patient."

"Now how is my little Ashley doing?"

Jimmy and Jeannie finished teaching *Exploring God's Word* to the Walkers and were almost through with level one of *My Father's House.* After talking with Pastor Johnson, Jimmy decided to go on to level two. He also made another conscious decision. He would not worry so

much about finishing the lesson, but would answer whatever questions they had, whether he got through the lesson or not. After all, it wasn't necessarily the lesson that was going to disciple them. And Jim and Karen had plenty of questions. Sometimes they were about insignificant things, and sometimes they were vital to their walk with God. They had a childlike curiosity, and they were ever eager to learn ways to please the Lord.

One night Jimmy taught on holiness. "Now, the word *holy* comes from the same word as *saint* in the New Testament. A saint in the Bible was not someone who was extra holy, but it was someone, anyone, who was saved. They were saints because God set them apart, especially from the world.

"In the Old Testament, people worshiped in the Tabernacle. They used certain utensils specifically for the Tabernacle that were designed to stay there and be used for nothing else. These were 'sanctified,' set apart or made holy for that purpose. And that is what the word *holy* actually means. It is something that is set apart for service.

"Now when the Lord filled me with the Holy Ghost, He not only saved me but He had in mind a specific plan and purpose for my life. I was set apart for God's use, not just because I am a preacher, but because I am somebody to whom He gave His Spirit. Now because I have been set apart for service to God, I watch how I speak, I control my actions, I control my thoughts. There are certain things I won't do or say because I know that I have been set apart for service to the Lord.

"Now, Karen, what if you went outside one day and found Tracy playing with your good china cups in a mud puddle?"

"She'd be in big trouble," said Karen.

"Exactly, and what would you do with the china cups?"

"Why, I'd take them from her before she broke them."

"That's right! And then what would you do with them?"

"Bring them in the house and wash them, I suppose."

"Right! And then after that, you'd take them back out and give them to her again?"

"No!"

"But you could if you wanted to."

"I wouldn't want to."

"That's right! You'd take them and put them in a special place and make sure that no harm came to them. And then you would take them down and use them on special occasions. Your china set has a special purpose."

"I see what you're saying," said Jim. "Since we're saved from sin, there's no use in going back to the mud puddle."

"Exactly," said Jimmy. "Now listen closely. Throughout our Christian walk, the Lord will work on us in certain areas to try to make us more like Him. It's a very personal thing. Most of the time the Lord will deal with us in the way we talk or think. We'll feel checked by the Holy Ghost. That's one reason that Lord gave both of you the Holy Ghost. Sometimes it is something we read or listen to; sometimes it someplace we shouldn't go. Sometimes I'll be reading a magazine or book and will feel that I shouldn't continue. It's God's Spirit that is checking me."

"Is that why you don't have a television?" asked Karen.

"Um, yeah," said Jimmy. "When Jeannie and I got married, we made a choice that we didn't want to raise our children in a home where we didn't have control over what came over the screen. And that has worked well for us. Sometimes people tell us that we're depriving Ashley, but Jeannie spends a lot more time in books with her, and I actually believe she uses her imagination more and has more advanced skills, but then I just might be a proud papa talking."

"She's smart as a whip," said Jim defensively. "And I know exactly what you mean about that television thing. There's nothing but junk on. I told Karen that those soap operas are nothing but . . ."

"Would you like some coffee," said Karen, rising from the table.

"Sure, that would be great," said Jimmy. He not only got the coffee but some cake and ice cream as well. Jeannie came into the room with the children, and they shared a puppet show while everyone enjoyed the desert.

On the way home, Jeannie turned to Jimmy and said, "I've been working on the church books you know."

"Yes, I'm aware," said Jimmy, knowing that Jeannie was leading up to something.

"Well, we have some bills that just aren't getting paid. I don't have anything over sixty days old, but we do have a printing bill that is old."

"I thought you paid that."

"I was going to, but I needed some supplies for the bathroom downstairs and some snacks for the neighborhood Bible club that I'm starting this week. By the time those things were purchased, I didn't have enough to pay the bill."

"Well, pay something on the bill at least."

"Jimmy, I think I'd better start working."

"I don't, Jeannie. We've talked about this before. What will we do with Ashley?"

"Maybe I could work while you are off, and that way we can save on a babysitter."

"Am I supposed to watch her while I'm sleeping?"

"Oh, I don't know, Jimmy, but we have to do something."

"Well, let's give it a few days. I want to go over our church budget and our personal budget. Maybe there is some fat we can trim out of there." He looked at Jeannie and smiled.

"And don't be looking at my stomach either."

While Jeannie was getting Ashley ready for bed, the phone rang in the kitchen. Jimmy picked it up. "Hello."

"Hello. Say, Brother Porter, did you get my letter?" It was Brother Peters.

"No, I don't believe so."

"I sent it to your church post office box. Maybe you haven't picked up your church mail for a few days or so. Perhaps it is still on the way."

All the time Brother Peters was speaking, there was a shuffling of papers in the background as Jimmy was sorting through rubble on his desk. "Oh, I'm sorry, Brother Peters. I had your letter after all. There were several letters I hadn't opened yet."

"I was writing to send you an application for Christmas for Christ support. I noticed that you hadn't applied yet, and there is a good chance you could receive funding. I know that the district has helped you some in the past, but this is help on a national level. Now, I can't guarantee

that you would get it, but I think that there is a very good chance that you could. If you're interested, you will need to fill out the paperwork right away, because they are going to be considering the applications in St. Louis soon. Please take the time to do it, because I believe that it would be of great benefit to you."

"Thanks, Brother Peters. Thanks a whole lot!"

Jimmy hung up the receiver and sorted through the rest of the mail. He found a handwritten envelope with a return address he didn't recognize. It was from some town in Pennsylvania that he didn't recognize, but it was a personal envelope and didn't look like junk mail, so he opened it and found a personal letter inside.

Dear Brother Porter,

I just heard that you went to West Chester to start a church. I have been praying that the Lord would send laborers into his harvest and I believe you are part of the answer to that prayer. Please accept this love offering for whatever you need to use it for and . . .

Behind the next page was a check for 175 dollars. Jimmy jumped up from his chair and ran to the kitchen waving the check. "Jeannie," he said, shouting as he went. "There is a God in heaven!"

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Discussion

In discipling a new convert, a teacher often waits for a "teachable moment" to explain why Apostolics hold certain positions on holiness. What responsibility does a teacher who is not the pastor have to teach on subjects such as proper dress and tithing? What responsibility does a pastor have?

Assignment

Using Bernard's texts as a source, answer the following questions. (This can be a role play in class.)

1. Why don't you drink?
2. Why do women in your church wear dresses?
3. Is taking drugs a sin?

Chapter 16

Closing the Circle

"Not just a church . . . churches"

Jimmy was at home in his office preparing for a lesson he was going to teach the next morning to the leaders of his church. He heard the door open behind him, and two hands suddenly covered his eyes so that he could no longer read the book in front of him.

"Guess who?" asked the teenage voice.

"I don't have to guess, Ashley," said Jimmy teasing, "I'd know that sweet voice anywhere."

"Daddy, you're the greatest."

"So what do want, honey?"

"Daddy, the youth group is going out for pizza tonight after the gym social, and I really could use a little money."

Jimmy was already fishing for his wallet. "I do declare, Ashley, I don't know who is worse, you or your little brother."

"Definitely him," said Ashley stuffing several green bills into her purse. "Thanks a million, Dad. I gotta go."

When it dawned on Jimmy that the kids were growing up right in front of his eyes and he never seemed to have time for them, he made several changes in his life including an open-door policy in his study. Those first years in West Chester had been so busy, and he had worked so hard to get things going, that it was like a revelation to him that he needed to get his family more in balance. But he wouldn't have traded those times for anything. The early years were particularly important, because it seemed that God had shown their family some personal miracles that cemented their faith in His ability to provide.

The door shut briefly only to be opened again by Jeannie, carrying a cup of coffee. "How's your lesson going?" she asked.

"Pretty good," he said smiling. Jimmy leaned back in his chair reflectively and finally said, "You know, I think I know why God wanted me to be a pastor."

"Why is that?" asked Jeannie.

"So He could teach me some things."

"Probably so," said Jeannie smiling. "What are you working on?"

"Leadership meeting for tomorrow morning. I'm teaching on priorities."

"So when are we taking a family vacation?"

"Since I'm teaching on taking time for your families, I've decided I'd better practice what I preach, and believe me, I'm planning one. And you know, I've really been thinking how much I've neglected to get regular exercise lately. That's going to be an important priority for me now."

"Make sure to tape it," she said winking, and as the

door shut Jimmy thought about how precious Jeannie was. She had sacrificed more than anyone would ever know. Because they were able to receive Christmas for Christ support she never had to work a secular job, but between family and church she put in some long days—some long years. God had been good to them and had rewarded them in many ways, but he knew now more than ever the number of tests that a pastor's family endures, and he was very thankful for her dedication.

As Jimmy drove to the church, he began thinking about what caused him to start this leadership meeting. After the church started to grow, Jimmy realized that he was often spending less time with sinners and new converts while more of his time was spent in counseling, often with the same few people, and these people often saw him for the same kinds of problems. In prayer one day, God directed Jimmy to II Timothy 2:2, where Paul instructed Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

It was then that Jimmy started a leadership program on Saturday mornings. All the people with leadership positions who could attend came for the one-hour session, and Jimmy spent his time with the people he thought would contribute to the growth of his assembly.

They sat around a long Sunday school table and Jimmy began his lesson. "I'm going to interrupt our series on developing your spiritual gift to share with you something that the Lord showed me about priorities.

"The first priority needs to be yourself." Several men gave startled looks. "I didn't say to be selfish, but you have to love yourself enough to maintain time with the

Lord. You have to love yourself enough to be saved yourself. When you fly on an airplane they tell you what to do if you're traveling with a small child and you need oxygen. First, secure the oxygen mask on your own face and then you can help someone else.

"Some of you men are interested in ministry and are making a good start. But it begins first with yourself. You can never help anyone else get their oxygen mask on if you are struggling to breathe yourself. You can't teach others how to live for the Lord if you are still working to develop the basic Christian disciplines. Some of you have talked to me about working for the Lord, and I commend you for your desire, but it is essential that you get back to the basics of a strong one-on-one relationship with the Lord before you launch out and do other things."

As he spoke the men scribbled obediently in their notebooks, and soon he came to his next point. "The next priority in your life needs to be your family. Paul wrote in I Timothy 5:8, 'But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'

"Now I know that Paul was speaking here primarily of meeting their natural needs, but I also think we can apply this principle to meeting their emotional and spiritual needs as well. To me, that seems essential, particularly in this day and age. A man must make his home a place where it is safe to serve the Lord. He is in control of the spiritual thermostat. That doesn't mean you can save your children or your spouse, but you can do everything in your power to maintain a spiritual home. This is a must! Of course, just as you can provide food on the table but it is their own choice to eat it, so ultimately the salvation

of your house is an individual matter, but you can and must provide the home life that is needed for their success.

"I wouldn't think of launching out and doing other things for the Lord without my family in some sort of order. Take time for your wife. Take time for your children. Take time to be available to them."

Jimmy continued in this vein for several minutes. He didn't mean to be so harsh, but he really wanted to reach Dan Smithers, a young man who always had one more plan to increase attendance or help the youth, or improve something at the church. He had great potential and good follow-through, but Jimmy was worried that his wife and children might be suffering some by his many church activities.

"And the third priority is ministry. After we have met the needs of our family members, the priority is to serve where we see that we can. Paul wrote in Galatians 6:10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' Here we see that the next priority is for us to do good to those who are around us. Of course, that first means the brothers and sisters here in the local assembly. One way that the world knows we are Christians is because of the love that we show one to another. Jesus said these words, and I John also records . . ."

When he was done speaking, Jimmy slipped out as the men were spending some time in prayer in the sanctuary. He sat at his office, pleased that the session had gone well, and began to sort through some papers. Suddenly a knock on the door interrupted his thoughts. "Come in," he said.

In walked Dan Smithers. "Have you got a minute?"

he asked with a deep worry etched into his forehead.

"Sure," said Jimmy. "What can I do for you? Is everything going all right in the youth group?"

"Just fine, Pastor, just fine."

"Is your home Bible study—"

"It's not that."

"Everything is okay at home, isn't it?"

"Oh, yeah. Just fine. But you see, I need to talk to you about something very personal."

"Yes?"

"Well, it's just that lately God has been dealing with me about . . . well, Pastor Porter, I don't know how to say this, but the reason that I came to see you is that Lord has been dealing with me lately to start a church."

Jimmy was ready to speak harshly to Dan. Several questions occurred that he might ask him. Don't you understand what I just taught on? . . . You are too new! Is your family in order? . . . Are you financially capable? . . . You're too young and immature!

Suddenly Jimmy recalled words that had been locked into his memory. It was as if Pastor Johnson were in the office and spoke them to him again. "Jimmy, you're not just going to start a church. You're going to start churches." And then Jimmy looked a little more closely at the immature young man who sat before him full of zeal, and he recognized something familiar. He remembered another young man who was just as idealistic and naive, one who didn't quite have everything in order. A pastor took a chance on the young man, and for that matter so did a district; and because of that, there was a church in this city today. Jimmy laughed in spite of himself and then leaned back in his chair thoughtfully.

"Have you talked to your wife about this?"

"Yes, sir, and she is in favor of it, too. Why just last week we were praying together and . . ."

Jimmy didn't hear the next few sentences for he was thinking, Now we've got two families who drive in from Coatesville, and if he started having service over there on a Sunday afternoon, we could . . ."

". . . and that's how she put it, Pastor."

Jimmy looked up and realized that Dan was done speaking. "I'll tell you what, Dan. If you're really serious about this, why don't you and your wife come over on Tuesday night and we'll talk about it some more. Perhaps we can even have some Bible studies where we can search out God's will. There is one thing that you can be certain of—if it's God's will, He will open the right doors for you to walk through."

"Oh, Pastor, that would be great!" said Dan jumping out of his chair. "I really appreciate your wisdom. I think you've got to be one of the smartest men in the whole world."

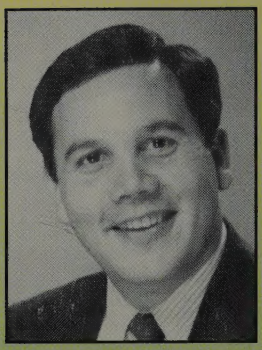
"Thanks," said Jimmy laughing a little to himself. "Thanks. And does seven o'clock on Tuesday sound okay?"

Discussion

Jesus told us to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send laborers into the field. What can be done to reach the vastly underchurched cities and communities in North America? As an organization, as districts, as local churches? What changes are necessary in order for us to become more effective?

Assignment

Write on the foregoing questions. Consider seriously what will be necessary to evangelize North America. Finally, answer this question: Considering the gifts that God has given me, what can I personally do towards this end?



David Norris graduated with a bachelor's degree in theology from Apostolic Bible Institute in 1975. Since then he has received a bachelor's degree in liberal studies from Neumann College in Aston, Pennsylvania, and his master's degree in theological studies from Eastern Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has served in a variety of ministries: Youth pastor, teacher, pastor, evangelist, and author.

Currently he is the Dean of Theology and a teacher at Kent Christian College in Dover, Delaware.

Since he was a teenager, David has felt a burden for home missions work. He and his wife, Nancy, answered the call to Wisconsin in the fall of 1978. A number of years of sowing seed yielded a bountiful harvest, and today a strong church thrives in West Bend, Wisconsin.

General Home Missions Division
United Pentecostal Church International
8855 Dunn Road
Hazelwood, MO 63042-2299

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